ESSAYS

ON THE

NATURE AND PRINCIPLES

OF

TASTE.

BY

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&c. &c. &c.

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ESSAY II.

OF THE

SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY

OF THE

MATERIAL WORLD.

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OF THE SUBLIMITY AND BEAUTY OF THE MATERIAL WORLD.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Forms.

PART III.

Of the Composition of Forms.

I.

THE preceding observations relate altogether to Simple Forms, or to such Forms as are described by a single Line.

It is obvious, however, that there are few Forms of such a kind. In the greater part

of beautiful Forms, whether in Nature or in Art, Lines of different descriptions unite, and there is a Beauty felt in certain combinations of these Lines, or in the production of a COMPLEX Form. The principles, therefore, which account for the Beauty of Simple Forms, cannot be supposed to account also for that peculiar Beauty which arises from the union of such Forms in Composition.

Simple Forms are distinguished to the Eye, by the uniformity or similarity of the Line by which they are described. Complex Forms are distinguished by the mixture of similarity and dissimilarity in these Lines, or, in other words, by their Uniformity and Variety. The same principle which leads us to ascribe the Beauty of Simple Forms, to some original Beauty in these Forms themselves, leads us also to ascribe the Beauty of complex Forms, to some original fitness in the Composition of Uni-

formity and Variety, to produce this Emotion.

That the Composition of Uniformity and Variety in Forms is agreeable, or is fitted by the constitution of our nature to excite an agreeable sensation in the Sense of Sight, I am not disposed to dispute. That these qualities are also capable of conveying to us very pleasing and very interesting expressions, and that in this manner they are felt as beautiful, I shall endeavour to show in the next chapter; but that the union of such material qualities as perceived by the Eye, and without reference to any Expression, is not in itself, and essentially beautiful, is obvious from the following considerations, of which I shall devolve the illustration upon the reader himself.

1. If the Composition of Uniformity and Variety in Forms, were in itself beautiful, it would necessarily follow, that in every case where this Composition was found, the Form would be beautiful. The greater part

of Forms, both in Art and Nature, are possessed of this union. The greater part of these Forms, however, are not beautiful.

2. If it is said, that it is not the mere union of Uniformity and Variety, but a certain union of them, which is beautiful, then this peculiar union must in all cases be necessarily beautiful. The only difference between Forms in this respect, must be either in the number or in the degree of their uniform, or of their varied parts. Let any particular or certain Composition of these parts be fixed upon; it will be found, that so far is this union of uniformity and variety from being in itself beautiful, that it cannot be extended to objects of any different kind, without altogether destroying their Beauty.

3. If it is farther said, that it is not any certain, but a proper Composition of Uniformity and Variety which is beautiful, then it is obvious, that this propriety is not the object of our external Senses, and that what-

ever Beauty arises from the Composition of these qualities, is to be ascribed to some other principle than to the mere material qualities alone.

II.

If, on the other hand, the account which has been given of the Natural Beauty of Forms, as expressive of certain affecting or interesting qualities, be just, it seems natural to suppose, that in the Composition of Forms, some propriety should arise from the Composition of EXPRESSION; that as Lines are distinguished by different characters, the mixture of different Lines should produce confusion, instead of Beauty; and that the Composition of Form should then only be beautiful, when the same relation is preserved amid variety, which is demanded in all other cases of Composition *.

That this is really the case, will, I trust,

* Essay I. Chap. ii. Sect. 3.

appear probable, from the following considerations:

1. I conceive it will be found, that the union of such qualities is felt as beautiful, only in those cases where the object itself has some determinate Expression; and that in objects where no such general Expression is found, no Beauty is expected in their Composition.

In the present case, Uniformity and Variety mean Similarity and Dissimilarity of Form. Every one knows, however, that the mere union of Similarity and Dissimilarity does not constitute a beautiful Form. In the Forms of Ground, of Water, of Vegetables, of Ornaments, &c. it is difficult to find any instance of a perfectly Simple Form, or in which Lines of different descriptions do not unite. It is obvious, however, that such objects are not beautiful in so great a proportion, and that, on the contrary, in all of them there are cases where this mixture is mere confusion, and in no

respect considered as beautiful. If we inquire farther, what is the circumstance which distinguishes beautiful objects of these kinds, it will be found, I believe, that it is some determinate character or Expression which they have to us; and that when this Expression is once perceived, we immediately look for, and expect some relation among the different parts to this general character.

It is almost impossible, for instance, to find any Form of Ground which is not complex, or in which different forms do not unite. Amid a great extent of landscape, however, there are few spots in which we are sensible of any beauty in their original formation; and wherever such spots occur, they are always distinguished by some prominent character; the character of Greatness, Wildness, Gaiety, Tranquillity, or Melancholy. As soon as this impression is made, as soon as we feel the expression of the scene, we immediately become sensible,

that the different Forms which compose it are suited to this Character; we perceive, and very often we imagine a correspondence among these parts, and we say, accordingly, that there is a relation, an harmony among them, and that Nature has been kind, in combining different circumstances with so much propriety, for the production of one effect. We amuse ourselves, also, in imagining improvements to the scene, either in throwing out some circumstances which do not correspond, or in introducing new ones, by which the general character may be more effectually supported. All this beauty of Composition, however, would have been unheeded, if the scene itself had not some determinate character; and all that we intend, by these imaginary improvements, either in the preservation of greater Uniformity, or in the introduction of greater Variety, is to establish a more perfect relation among the different parts to this peculiar character.

In the laying out of grounds, in the same manner, every man knows, that the mere Composition of similar and dissimilar Forms does not constitute Beauty; that some character is necessary, to which we may refer the relation of the different parts; and that where no such character can be created, the Composition itself is only confusion. It is upon these principles, accordingly, that we uniformly judge of the Beauty of such scenes. If there is no character discernible, no general Expression, which may afford our imaginations the key of the scene, although we may be pleased with its neatness, or its cultivation, we feel no Beauty whatever in its composition, and we leave it with no other impression than that of regret, that so much labour and expense should be thrown away upon so confused and ungrateful a subject. If, on the other hand, the scene is expressive, if the general Form is such as to inspire some peculiar Emotion, and the different circumstances

such as to correspond to this effect, or to increase it, we immediately conclude, that the Composition is good, and yield ourselves willingly to its influence. If, lastly, amidst such a scene, we find circumstances introduced, which have no relation to the general Expression; if Forms of Gaiety and Gloom, Greatness and Ornament, Rudeness and Tranquillity, &c. are mingled together without any attention to one determinate effect, we turn with indignation from the confusion, and conclude, that the Composition is defective in its first principles. In all cases of this kind, we become sensible of the Beauty of Composition, only when the scene has some general character, to which the different Forms in Composition can refer; and determine its Beauty by the effect of this union in maintaining or promoting this general Expression. The same observation may be extended to the Forms of Wood and Water; but I willingly refer the reader to Mr Whately's ex-

cellent "Observations upon Modern Gar-" dening," for the full illustration of this remark, with regard to the different objects of natural scenery.

In the Vegetable World, also, if the mere composition of Uniformity and Variety were sufficient to constitute Beauty, it would almost be impossible to find any instance where Vegetable Forms should not be beautiful. That this is not the case every one knows; and the least attention to the language of Mankind will shew, that wherever such Forms are beautiful, they are felt as characteristic or expressive; and that the Beauty of the Composition is determined by the same principle which regulates our opinion with regard to the Composition of the Forms of Ground. The beautiful Forms which we ourselves remark in this kingdom; the Forms which have been selected by Sculptors for embellishment or ornament, by Painters for the effect of landscape, by Poets for description

or allusion, are all such as have some determinate Expression or Association; their Beauty is generally expressed by epithets significant of this Character; and if we are asked the reason of our admiration, we immediately assign this Expression as a reason satisfactory to ourselves for the Beauty we discover in them. As soon also as we feel this Expression in any Vegetable Form, we perceive or demand a relation among the different parts to this peculiar Character. If this relation is maintained, we feel immediately that the Composition of the Form is good. We shew it as a beautiful instance of the operation of Nature, and we speak of it, as a Form in which the utmost harmony and felicity of Composition is displayed. If, on the contrary, the different parts do not seem adjusted to the general character, if instead of an agreement among these parts in the maintaining or promoting this Expression, there appears only a mixture of similar and dissimilar parts, without any

correspondence or alliance, we reject it as a confused and insignificant Form, without meaning or beauty. If, in the same manner, the general Form has no Expression, we pass it by without attention, and with a conviction, that where there is no Character to which the relation of the different parts may be referred, there can be no propriety or beauty in its Composition.

In the different species of Vegetables which possess Expression, and which consequently admit of Beauty in Composition, it is observable also, that every individual does not possess this Beauty; and it is the same principle which determines our opinion of the Beauty of Individuals, that determines our opinion of the Beauty of different species. The Oak, the Myrtle, the weeping-Willow, the Vine, the Ivy, the Rose, &c. are beautiful classes of Plants: but every Oak and Myrtle, &c. does not constitute a beautiful Form. The many physical causes which affect their growth,

affect also their Expression; and it is only when they possess in purity the peculiar Character of the class, that the individuals are felt as beautiful. In the judgment accordingly that we form of this Beauty, we are uniformly guided by the circumstance of their expression. When, in any of these instances, we find an accumulation of Forms, different from what we generally meet with, we feel a kind of disappointment; and however much the Composition may exhibit of mere uniform and varied parts, we pass it by with some degree of indignation. When the discordant parts are few, we lament that accident should have introduced a variety which is so prejudicial, and we amuse ourselves with fancying how beautiful the Form would be, if these parts were omitted. It is only when we discover a general correspondence among the different parts to the whole of the character; and perceive the uniformity of this character maintained amid all their varieties,

that we are fully satisfied with the Beauty of the Form. The superiority of the productions of Sculpture and Painting to their originals in Nature, altogether consists in the power which the Artists have to correct these accidental defects, in keeping out every circumstance which can interrupt the general Expression of the subject or the Form, and in presenting, pure and unmixed, the Character which we have associated with the objects in real Nature.

The same observation extends to every species of artificial Form; but the pursuit of it would necessarily lead to a very long, and, I believe, a very unnecessary discussion. With regard to this subject, I shall leave the Reader to his own observation, and shall only beg of him to reflect, whether, if the Composition of uniformity and variety were necessarily beautiful, every species almost of artificial Form would not be found to be beautiful; whether, on the contrary, the Beauty of Composition is not perceived

in those subjects only where the Form itself has some Character or Expression, or where it affords him some distinct principle, to which the relation of the different parts may be referred; and whether he does not determine the Beauty of the Composition, by the effect of this union of different parts in exciting one definite Emotion? It is perhaps unnecessary to remark, that, in pursuing such observations, it is proper to leave out every consideration of design or of utility, and that the fittest subjects for such experiments are ornamental Forms, or those Forms in which no other object is sought, than the mere production of Beauty.

I shall content myself with observing, upon this subject, that whatever is the source of the Beauty of complex Forms, it is natural to suppose it should be expressed in language; and that if Uniformity and Variety were beautiful in themselves, and by the constitution of our Nature, it is reasonable to think, that, in describing beautiful Forms,

such qualities should be assigned as the foundation of their Beauty. If I am not deceived, however, this is very far from being the case. In describing such objects, we never satisfy ourselves with distinguishing them by such characters, and if any person were in such terms to describe any Form to ourselves, we should be at as great a loss as ever, with regard to its Beauty. I apprehend, on the contrary, that the natural and uniform method we take for this purpose, is, first to convey to our hearers the idea of its Character or Expression; and after having given them this general conception of it, we enter into the detail of its Composition, and endeavour to explain to them, with how great propriety the different parts are accommodated, to preserve and to promote this characteristic Expression; and if we succeed in this description, we never fail not only to be understood, but to convey also to those who hear us, a perfect belief of the Excellence and Beauty of the Composi-

tion. If the mere mixture of uniformity and variety were beautiful, independent of any relation to Expression, all this natural process could never take place, and if it did, could never convey any opinion of Beauty.

2. I believe it will be found, that different proportions of Uniformity and Variety, are required in Forms of different characters; and that the principle from which we determine the Beauty of such proportion, is from its correspondence to the nature of the peculiar Emotion which the Form itself is fitted to excite. Every one knows, that some Emotions require a greater degree of uniformity, and others, a greater degree of variety in their objects; and perhaps, in general, all strong or powerful Emotions, and all Emotions which border upon pain, demand uniformity or sameness, and all weak Emotions, and all Emotions which belong to positive pleasure, demand variety or novelty, in the objects of them. Upon this constitution of our Nature, the Beauty

of Composition seems chiefly to depend: and the judgment we form of this Beauty appears, in all cases, to be determined by the correspondence of the different parts of the Composition in preserving or promoting the peculiar Expression by which the object itself is distinguished.

In the Forms of Ground, for instance, there is very obviously no certain proportion of uniformity and variety, which is permanently beautiful. The same degree of uniformity which is pleasing in a scene of Greatness or Melancholy, would be disagreeable or dull in a scene of Gaiety or Splendour. The same degree of variety which would be beautiful in these, would be distressing in the others. By what rule, however, do we determine the different Beauty of these proportions? Not surely by the Composition itself, else one determinate Composition would be permanently beautiful; but by the relation of this Composition to the Expression or Character of the scene

by its according with the demand and expectation of our Minds; and by its being suited to that particular state of interest or of fancy, which is produced by the Emotion that the scene inspires. When this effect is accordingly produced, when the proportion either of uniformity or variety corresponds to the nature of this Emotion, we conclude that the Composition is good. When this proportion is violated, when there is more uniformity of Expression than we choose to dwell upon, or more variety than we can follow without distraction, we conclude that the Composition is defective, and speak of it either as dull or confused. Whatever may be the number of distinct Characters, which the Forms of Ground possess, there is an equal number of different proportions required in the Composition of them; and so strong is this natural determination of the Beauty of Composition, that, after admiring the Composition of one scene, we very often, in a

few minutes afterwards, find equal Beauty in a Composition of a totally different kind, when it distinguishes a scene of an opposite character.

"The style of every part (says Mr "Whately, in the conclusion of his Obser- "vations upon Ground) must be accom- "modated to the character of the whole; "for every piece of ground is distinguished "by certain properties; it is either tame "or bold, gentle or rude, continued or "broken; and if any variety inconsistent "with these properties be obtruded, it has "no other effect than to weaken one idea, "without raising another. The insipidity "of a flat is not taken away by a few "scattered hillocks; a continuation of un- "even ground can alone give the idea of "inequality. A large, deep, abrupt break, "among easy swells and falls, seems at "best but a piece left unfinished, and which "ought to have been softened; it is not "more natural, because it is more rude.

" On the other hand, a small fine polished " form, in the midst of rough misshapen " ground, though more elegant than all " about it, is generally no better than a " patch, itself disgraced, and disfiguring " the scene. A thousand instances might " be added, to shew, that the prevailing " idea ought to pervade every part, so far " at least indispensably, as to exclude " whatever distracts it; and as much further " as possible to accommodate the character " of the ground to that of the scene it be- " longs to."

After observing that the same principle extends to the proportion, and to the number of the parts, he observes, " That ground " is seldom beautiful or natural without " variety, or even without contrast; and " the precautions which have been given, " extend no farther, than to prevent variety " from degenerating into inconsistency, " and contrast into contradiction. Within " the extremes Nature supplies an inex-

" haustible fund; and variety thus limited,
" so far from destroying, improves the ge-
" neral effect. Each distinguished part
" makes a separate impression; and all
" bearing the same stamp, all concurring to
" the same end, every one is an additional
" support to the prevailing idea.—An accu-
" rate observer will see in every Form seve-
" ral circumstances, by which it is distin-
" guished from every other. If the scene
" be mild and quiet, he will place together
" those which do not differ widely, and he
" will gradually depart from the similitude.
" In ruder scenes, the succession will be
" less regular, and the transitions more sud-
" den. The character of the place must
" determine the degree of difference be-
" tween contiguous Forms.—An assem-
" blage of the most elegant Forms in the
" happiest situations is to a degree indis-
" criminate, if they have not been selected
" and arranged with a design to produce
" certain Expressions: an air of magnifi-

"cence or of simplicity, of cheerfulness, "tranquillity, or some other general cha- "racter, ought to pervade the whole; and "objects pleasing in themselves, if they "contradict that character, should there- "fore be excluded; those which are only "indifferent must sometimes make room "for such as are more significant; many "will often be introduced for no other "merit than their Expression; and some "which are in general rather disagreeable, "may occasionally be recommended by it. "Barrenness itself may be an acceptable "circumstance in a spot dedicated to Soli- "tude and Melancholy." As the great secret of gardening seems thus to consist in the accurate preservation of the character of every scene, whether original or created; so it is the same principle that determines the opinion of men with regard to its Beauty; and whoever will read Mr Whately's excellent book with attention, will perceive, that all his rules with regard to the Forms

of Ground, of Water, of Wood, of Rocks, and of Buildings, may be referred to this leading principle; and that they are nothing more than investigations of the character of these different Forms, and directions how to apply them in scenes of different Expression.

Our opinion of the Beauty of vegetable forms seems directed by the same principle. Many of the classes of trees have distinct characters. There are therefore different compositions which are beautiful in their forms: and in all of them, that Composition only is beautiful which corresponds to the nature of the Expression they have, or of the Emotion which they excite. The character, for instance, of the weeping-willow, is melancholy, of the birch and of the aspin, gaiety: the character of the horse-chesnut, is solemnity, of the oak, majesty, of the yew, sadness. In each of these cases, the general Form or Composition of the parts is altogether different; all of them,

however, are beautiful; and were this proportion in point of Composition changed, were the weeping-willow to assume an equal degree of variety with the oak, or the oak to shew an equal degree of uniformity with the weeping-willow, we should undoubtedly feel it as a defect, and conclude that, in this change of Form, the Beauty of the character and of the Composition was lost.

It is in this manner, accordingly, that we judge of the Beauty of individuals, in these different classes. All these individuals are not beautiful; and wherever they appear as beautiful, it is when their Form adheres perfectly to their character; when no greater degree either of uniformity or variety is assumed, than suits that peculiar Emotion which their expression excites in our minds. An oak, which wreathes not into vigorous or fantastic branches, a yew, which grows into thin and varied forms, a plane-tree, or a horse-chesnut, which assumes not a deep, and

almost solid mass of foliage, &c. appear to us as imperfect and deformed productions. They seem to aim at an expression which they do not reach, and we speak of them accordingly as wanting the Beauty, because they want the character of their class.

In the formation of beautiful groups, the same adherence to Expression is necessary: and whatever may be the character of the group, the real limit to variety is correspondence in this Expression. The permanent character of trees arises from their Form or their Colour. In so far as Form is concerned, Forms of different character are never found to unite, or to constitute a beautiful composition. A mixture, for instance, of the light and upright branches of the almond, with the falling branches of the willow, the heavy branches of the horse-chesnut, and the wild arms of the oak, would be absolute confusion, and would be intolerable in any scene where design or intention could be supposed. The mixture

of trees, on the other hand, that correspond in their Forms, and that unite in the production of one character, are found to constitute beautiful groups. We speak of them accordingly as beautiful from this cause. When we meet with them in natural scenery, we are pleased with the fortunate, though accidental connection, and we say, that they could not have been better united by the hand of Art: When we meet with them in cultivated scenes, we praise the taste of the artist, and say, that the Composition is pure and harmonious. "Trees, "(says Mr Whately) which differ but in "one of these circumstances, whether of "shape, of green, or of growth, though "they agree in every other, are sufficiently "distinguished for the purpose of Variety; "if they differ in two or three, they become "contrasts: if in all, they are opposite, "and seldom group well together. Those, "on the contrary, which are of one charac- "ter, and are distinguished only as the

" characteristic mark is strongly or faintly " impressed upon them, as a young beech " and a birch, an acacia and a larch, all " pendent though in different degrees, form " a beautiful mass, in which unity is pre- " served without sameness." How far the same principle extends to landscape-painting, they who are aquainted with the art will be at no loss to determine.

In all the different kinds of ORNAMENTAL Forms, in the same manner, instead of there being any one determinate proportion of Uniformity and Variety beautiful, there are, in fact, as many varieties of beautiful Composition, as there are varieties of Character; and the rule by which we judge of this Beauty, in every particular case, is by the correspondence of the Composition to the character which the Form is intended to express. To give the same proportion of uniform or of varied parts to every species of ornamental Form, to Forms of Splendour, of Magnificence, of Gaiety, of Delicacy, or

of Melancholy, would be to sin against the very first principle of Composition, and would immediately be detected, even by those who never heard of the principles of Composition. The beautiful Form of the Vase, for instance, is employed in many different kinds of ornament, and may either be Magnificent, Elegant, Simple, Gay, or Melancholy. In all these cases, however, the Composition is different. A greater proportion of Uniformity distinguishes it when destined to the Expression of Simplicity, Magnificence, or Melancholy, and a greater proportion of Variety, when destined to the Expression of Elegance or Gaiety. We immediately perceive also that there is propriety and Beauty in this difference of Composition; and if we are asked, why it is so, we readily answer, because it accords with the peculiar character which the Form is there intended to have. If, on the other hand, this proportion is inverted, if the Vase upon a tomb, has all the varieties of a Go-

blet, or the latter all the uniformity of the funereal Urn, we immediately perceive an impropriety and deformity, and as readily explain it, by saying that the Composition is unfitted to the Expression which the object is intended to have.

The Orders of Architecture have different characters from several causes, and chiefly, I believe, from the different quantities of matter in their Entablatures. The Tuscan is distinguished by its Severity; the Doric by its Simplicity; the Ionic by its Elegance; the Corinthian and Composite by their Lightness and Gaiety. To these characters, their several ornaments are suited with consummate Taste. Change these ornaments, give to the Tuscan the Corinthian Capital, or to the Corinthian the Tuscan, and every person would feel not only a disappointment from this unexpected Composition, but a sentiment also of impropriety, from the appropriation of a grave or sober ornament to a subject of Splendour, and of

a rich or gaudy ornament to a subject of Severity. Even in the commonest of all Forms, the Forms of Furniture, the same principle is obvious. Chairs, Tables, Mirrors, Candlesticks, &c. may have very different characters; they may be either Simple, Elegant, Rich, or Magnificent. Whatever this character may be, we demand a correspondence in the Composition. The same number of uniform parts, which is beautiful in any simple Form, is insipid in an elegant, and mean in a rich or magnificent one. The same variety of parts which is beautiful in a Form of splendour or magnificence, is confused in an elegant, and tawdry in a simple, Form.

In these, and a thousand other cases of the same kind, it will be found, that no certain proportion of Uniformity and Variety is permanently felt as beautiful; that, on the contrary, wherever the Form, either in itself, or from its situation, has any determinate Expression, the Beauty of Compo-

sition arises from its correspondence to that Expression; and that wherever Forms differ in character, a different Composition is approved, and is said to be approved, upon this account. I shall only add to these hints upon the subject, that the natural language of men is uniformly guided by this principle; and that whenever they attempt to describe the excellence of any Composition, it is not by explaining the peculiar proportions of Uniformity and Variety which may obtain in it, but by showing how well this proportion accords with the Expression by which the object itself is distinguished.

If the illustrations which I have now offered are just, we shall have reason to conclude, that the mere Composition of Uniformity and Variety is not beautiful in itself, or from the original constitution of our nature; that it is felt as beautiful only in those cases, where the Form is distinguished by some character or Expression; and, that

the Beauty of the Composition arises, in every case, from its correspondence to the nature of that Emotion which this Expression is fitted to excite.

These conclusions seem to lead to a very different rule for the Composition of beautiful Forms, from that which Mr Hogarth has laid down in his Analysis of Beauty "The way (says he) of composing pleasing "Forms, is to be accomplished by making "choice of variety of lines, as to their shapes "and dimensions; and then again by varying their situations with each other, by all "the different ways that can be conceived, "and at the same time (if a solid Figure be "the subject of the Composition) the contents or space that is to be inclosed within those lines, must be duly considered "and varied too, as much as possible with "propriety." Although it is with much diffidence that I differ from Mr Hogarth, yet I cannot help being of opinion (in so far at least as the natural Beauty of Forms

is concerned), that this rule might be followed in a thousand cases, without the production of any degree of Beauty; that if the distinguishing Form is inexpressive or indifferent, all this Variety would only create confusion; and that in its application to Forms of different characters or Expression, it would excite a sentiment of impropriety, instead of pleasure.

On the other hand, the view which I have now given of the subject, would seem to lead to the following rules for beautiful Composition:

1. That wherever beautiful Form is intended, some characteristic or expressive Form should be selected, as the ground or subject of the Composition. And,

2. That the Variety (whether in the form, the number, or the proportion of the parts) should be adapted to the peculiar nature of this Expression, or of that Emotion which this Expression is fitted to excite in the mind of the spectator.

3. Forms of this kind are either single or dependent. In single or in dependent Forms, their character is at the pleasure of the Artist; and that will be always most beautiful, in which the character is best preserved.

4. In dependent Forms, on the contrary, or those which are designed for particular scenes or situations, their character must be determined by that of the scene or situation; and that also will be the most beautiful Form, in the composition of which, the alliance to the general character is most precise and delicate.

III.

The same principle seems to extend to the Composition of Colours. The mere mixture of Colours is not beautiful. In the different Colours that are mingled upon a Painter's pallet, or in a book of patterns, we say there is no Beauty, because there is no Relation. What then is the relation

which is necessary to constitute beautiful Composition? It is not their mere relation as Colours, because Colours of very different kinds are found to produce beautiful Compositions. It is not any established relation between particular Colours which is beautiful from our original constitution, because, in different subjects, different Compositions are necessary. I humbly apprehend, that it is the Relation of Expression.

In Natural Scenery, for instance, the Colours of the great ingredients, Ground, Water, Wood, Rocks, and Buildings, are very different, and are susceptible of great varieties. In every scene, however, which is expressive, we look for and demand an unity in the Expression of these different Colours. We often find fault, accordingly, with the Colour of particular objects in such scenes, and say that they are too Rich, too Solemn, or too Cheerful, for the rest of the scene. The vivid Green, for instance, which is so pleasing in a cheerful landscape,

would ill suit a scene of Melancholy or Desolation. The brown heath, which so singularly accords with scenes of Gloom or Barrenness, would be intolerable in a landscape of Gaiety. The grey rock, which throws so venerable an air over grave or solemn scenes, would have but a feeble effect in scenes of horror. The blue and peaceful stream, which gives such loveliness to the solitary valley, would appear altogether misplaced amid scenes of rude and savage Majesty. The white foam and discoloured waters of the torrent, alone suit the wildness of their Expression.

The great difference in the Colours of Trees, requires attention in their Composition into Groups. If the Oak, the Yew, the Birch, the Fir, the Aspin, the Willow, &c. were mixed together indiscriminately, every one would exclaim at the impropriety of the Composition, and say that there was no relation, and no character preserved. Unite, however, only such Trees, as

are distinguished by Colours of a similar character, the Composition will be beautiful, and the variety will only serve to enhance and strengthen the Expression. If any other rule but their Expression were followed, would the effect be the same?

Different Compositions of Colours also are necessary in the different appearances of Trees, whether as a Clump, a Thicket, a Grove, or a Wood. The same degree of uniformity in colouring which is beautiful in a Wood, is displeasing in a Thicket or open Grove; the same degree of variety which is beautiful in these, is unpleasing in the other. To what principle shall these differences be referred, but to the difference of Character; to the Airiness and Gaiety of the one, to the Majesty and Solemnity of the other?

The scenes of Nature often derive their Character even from the season of the day in which they are viewed, and the aspect which they regard. How much the Beauty

of the Composition of Colours in such scenes, arises from the Composition of their Expression, is beautifully illustrated in the following observations of Mr Whately.

"Some species and situations of objects "are in themselves adapted to receive or to "make the impressions which characterize "the principal parts of the day: their "splendour, their sobriety, and other pecu- "liarities recommend or prohibit them upon "different occasions; the same considera- "tions direct the choice also of their appen- "dages: and in consequence of a judicious "assemblage and arrangement of such as "are proper for the purpose, the *Spirit* of "the Morning, the *Excess* of Noon, or the "*Temperance* of Evening, may be improved "or corrected by the application of the "scene to the season.

"In the *Morning*, the freshness of the "air allays the force of the sun-beams, and "their brightness is free from glare; the "most splendid objects do not offend the

" eye, nor suggest the idea of heat in the
" extreme ; but they correspond with the
" glitter of the dew which bespangles all the
" produce of the earth, and with the cheer-
" fulness diffused over the whole face of
" creation. A variety of buildings may
" therefore be introduced to enliven the
" view, their colour may be the purest white
" without danger of excess, though they face
" the eastern sun ; and those which are in
" other aspects should be so contrived, that
" their turrets, their pinnacles, or other
" points, may catch glances of the rays,
" and contribute to illuminate the scene.
" The trees, in general, ought to be of the
" lightest greens, and so situated as not to
" darken much of the landscape by the
" length of their shadows. Vivacity in the
" streams, and transparency in a lake, are
" more important at this than at any other
" hour of the day ; and an open exposure
" is commonly the most delightful, both for

" the effect of particular objects, and the
" general character of the scene.

" At *Noon*, every expedient should be
" used to correct the excess of the season:
" the shades are shortened, they must there-
" fore be thick, but open plantations are
" generally preferable to a close covert:
" they afford a passage, or at least admit-
" tance to the air, which, tempered by the
" coolness of the place, soft to the touch,
" and refreshing at once to all the senses,
" renders the shade a delightful climate,
" not a mere refuge from heat. Groves,
" even at a distance, suggest the ideas which
" they realize upon the spot, and by mul-
" tiplying the appearances, improve the
" sensations of relief from the extremity of
" the weather; Grottos, Caves, and Cells,
" are on the same account agreeable cir-
" cumstances in a sequestrated recess: and
" though the chill within be hardly ever to-
" lerable, the eye catches only an idea of
" coolness from the sight of them. Other

" buildings ought in general to be cast into " shade, that the glare of reflection from " them may be obscured. The large ex- " panse of a lake is also too dazzling: but " a broad river moving gently, and partially " darkened with shadow, is very refreshing, " more so perhaps than a little rill, for the " vivacity of the latter rather disturbs the " repose which generally prevails at mid- " day: every breeze then is still; the re- " flection of an aspin leaf scarcely trembles " on the water; the animals remit their " search of food, and man ceases from his " labour; the stream of heat seems to op- " press all the faculties of the mind, and all " the active powers of the body; and any " very lively motion discomposes the lan- " guor in which we then delight to in- " dulge.

" In the *Evening*, all splendour fades; " no buildings glare, no water dazzles, the " calmness of a lake suits the quiet of the " time, the light hovers there, and prolongs

" the duration of day. An open reach of a " river has a similar though a fainter effect, " and a continued stream all exposed pre- " serves the last rays of the sun along the " whole length of its course, to beautify the " landscape. But a brisk current is not so " consistent as a lake with the tranquillity " of Evening, and other objects should in " general conform to the temper of the " time: buildings of a dusky hue are most " agreeable to it. No contrast of light and " shade can then be produced; but if the " plantations, which by their situation are " the first to be obscured, be of the darkest " greens, if the buildings which have a " western aspect be of a light colour, and " if the management of the lawns and the " water be adapted to the same purpose, " a diversity of tints will be preserved long " after the greater effects are faded."

There are few subjects where the Beauty or Deformity of the Composition of Colours is more observable, or at least more com-

monly observed, than in the article of DRESS. The following hints may perhaps lead the Reader to perceive, that this Beauty is also dependent upon Expression:

1. It may be observed, that no Dress is beautiful, in which there is not some leading or predominant Colour displayed, or in which, if I may use the expression, there is not some unity of colouring. A dress in which different colours were employed in equal quantities, in which one half of the body was distinguished by one Colour, and the other by another, or in which each particular limb was differently coloured, would be ridiculous instead of being beautiful. It is in this way, accordingly, that Mountebanks are dressed, and it never fails to produce the effect that is intended by it, to excite the mirth and the ridicule of the common people.

2. No dress is ever remarked as beautiful, in which the prevailing Colour has not some pleasing or affecting Expression.

There are a variety of colours which are chosen for common apparel, which have no Character or Expression in themselves, and which are chosen for no other reason, but because they are convenient for the peculiar occupations or amusements in which we are engaged. Such dress accordingly has no Beauty. When we say, that it is a useful or a convenient Colour, we give it all the approbation that it is entitled to. There are, on the contrary, a variety of colours which are expressive from peculiar Associations, which are either gay, or delicate, or rich, or grave, or melancholy. It is always such Colours that are chosen for what is properly called Dress, or for that species of Apparel, in which something more than mere convenience is intended. When we speak of such Dress, accordingly, we generally describe its Beauty by its Character, by its being delicate or rich, or gay or magnificent, or in other words, by its being distinguished by some pleasing or affecting

Expression. We should feel an equal impropriety in any person's choosing the Colour of ornamental Dress, on account of its convenience, as in his choosing the Colour of his common apparel, because it was gay, or delicate, or splendid.

This difference of Expression constitutes the only distinction that seems to subsist between the Colours that are fit for common, and those that are fit for ornamental apparel. But besides this, there is another constituent of the Beauty of the prevailing Colour: its relation to the character or situation of the Person who wears it. The same Colour which would be beautiful in the dress of a Prince, would be ridiculous in the dress of a Peasant. We expect gay Colours in the dress of youth, and sober and temperate colours in the dress of age. We feel a propriety in the cheerful Colours of a Marriage, and in the melancholy colouring of Mourning. There is a propriety of relation also between the colours that

distinguish the Dress of certain situations, and these situations themselves, which we never see violated without some degree of pain. Besides all this, there is a relation of a still more delicate kind; between the Colours of Dress, and the Character that distinguishes the countenance and form of the Person who wears it; which, however little attended to, is one of the most important articles in the Composition of Dress, and which is never observed or violated without either increasing or diminishing the Beauty of the Person it distinguishes. As the general Beauty of Dress depends upon the predominant Colour being distinguished by some pleasing or interesting Expression; so the Beauty of Dress in any particular situation or character, depends upon this Expression being suited to that particular character or situation.

3. No Dress is ever considered as beautiful in which the Composition of the inferior Colours is not adapted to the peculiar Ex-

pression of the prevailing Colour. The mere accumulation of different Colours, without any regard to the general Colour of the Dress, every one knows to be proverbially expressive of ignorance and vulgarity. To suit these Colours, on the other hand, to the prevailing Colour, is considered as the great criterion of Taste in this kind of Composition. If you inquire, accordingly, why, in any particular case, such Colours are not suited to the Dress, you will be told, that they are either too glaring, too solemn, too gay, or too delicate, for the predominant Colour; in other words, that they do not accord with the Expression of the Dress, and that on this account the Composition is not beautiful. Wherever, in this article, it is said, that Colours either suit, or do not suit, what is meant or felt, I believe is, that their Expressions either agree or do not agree

It is upon the same account, that different Colours in Dress, admit of very different degrees of variety, in the Composition

of the subordinate Colours. Rich Colours admit of little variety. Grave or melancholy Colours of less. Delicate Colours admit more of contrast than of variety. Gay or cheerful Colours demand a great proportion of variety. In all these cases, the proportion which is beautiful is that which accords with the peculiar nature of the Emotion that the predominant Colour excites. Strong Emotions, and Emotions which border upon pain, require uniformity in their objects. Rich, or magnificent, or mournful Dresses, require therefore a great proportion of uniformity in the Composition of the colouring. Weak Emotions require to be supported and enlivened. Dresses of a gentle or delicate character are therefore best illustrated by contrast. Emotions which belong to pleasure, demand Variety in their objects. Dresses of a gay character, admit therefore of a greater proportion of Variety in their colouring, than any of the others.

These slight hints (and the subject deserves no more) may perhaps lead the Reader to conclude, that the Beauty of Dress (in so far as it relates to the Composition of Colours) depends upon the Unity of Expression: and that Taste, in this respect, consists in the accurate perception of the Expressions of Colours, and of their relation both to each other, and to the character or situation of the person for whom they are destined.

There is one subject, in which some attention to those principles might perhaps be productive of no unimportant effect: I mean in Dramatic Representation. Every one has perceived the impropriety of the greater part of the Dresses which are seen upon the Stage. The confusion of rich and tawdry, gay and grave Drapery, in the same performance; the neglect of every kind of correspondence between the Dress, and the Character it distinguishes; Comedy and Tragedy clothed in the same Colours; and

instead of any relation among the different Dresses of the same performance, or any correspondence to the Character of that performance, each particular Dress at variance with another, and all of them left to be determined by the caprice or vanity of the Actor! If instead of this, we were to find in each distinguishing Character, some agreement between the Expression of the Dress and the nature of that Character; if different Ages, and Professions, and Situations, were attired with the same regard to propriety that we expect in real life; if the whole of the Dresses in every particular performance had some relation to the Character of that performance, and to the Emotion it is destined to excite in our minds; if no greater degree of Variety was admitted in this respect, than was consistent with this unity of Expression; and if the whole were so imagined, as to compose a beautiful mass or group of colouring, in those scenes where any number of personages

were assembled together; some addition, I conceive, would be given to the effect of an Art, which has the capacity, at least, of becoming one of the most powerful means we know, both of strengthening Virtue and of communicating Knowledge.

Whether the principle which I have now explained, may not extend to what is called the Harmony of Colouring in Historical Painting; whether the Beauty of the prevailing Colour is not dependent upon the agreement of its Expression, with that peculiar Expression or Character which distinguishes the scene; and whether the Beauty of the Composition of the subordinate Colours is not determined by its effect in preserving this unity of Expression, I shall leave to be determined by those who are more learned in the Art, and better acquainted with instances by which the truth of the observation may be tried.

SECTION II.

Of the Relative Beauty of Forms.

BESIDES those qualities of which Forms in themselves are expressive to us, and which constitute what I have called their NATURAL Beauty, there are other qualities of which they are the Signs, from their being the subjects of Art, or produced by Wisdom or Design, for some end. Whatever is the effect of Art, naturally leads us to the consideration of that Art which is its cause, and of that End or purpose for which it was produced. When we discover skill or wisdom in the one, or usefulness or propriety in the other, we are conscious of a very pleasing Emotion; and the Forms which we have found by experience to be associated with such qualities, become naturally and necessarily expressive of them, and affect us with

the Emotions which properly belong to the qualities they signify. There is therefore an additional source of Beauty in Forms, from the Expression of such qualities; which, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall beg leave to call their RELATIVE Beauty.

Every work of Design may be considered in one or other of the following lights: Either in relation to the Art or Design which produced it,—to the nature of its Construction for the purpose or end intended,—or to the nature of the End which it is thus destined to serve; and its Beauty accordingly depends, either upon the excellence or wisdom of this Design, upon the Fitness or propriety of this construction, or upon the Utility of this end. The considerations of Design, of Fitness, and of Utility, therefore, may be considered as the three great sources of the Relative Beauty of Forms. In many cases, this Beauty arises from all these Expressions together; but it may be useful to consider them separately,

and to remark the peculiar influence of each, upon the Beauty of Forms.

PART I.

Of the Influence of Design upon the Beauty of Forms.

I.

That the quality of design is in many cases productive of the Emotion of Beauty, seems to me too obvious to require any illustration. The Beauty of Design in a Poem, in a Painting, in a musical Composition, or in a Machine, are Expressions which perpetually occur, both in books and in conversation, and which sufficiently indicate the cause or source of the Emotion.

Wherever we discover Fitness or Utility, we infer the existence of Design. In those Forms, accordingly, which are distinguish-

ed by such qualities, the discovery of an end immediately suggests to us the belief of Intention or Design; and the same material qualities of Form, which signify to us this Fitness or Usefulness, are the Signs to us also of the Design or Thought which produced them.

It is obvious, however, that we often perceive the Expression of Design in Forms, both in Art and Nature, in which we discover neither Fitness nor Utility. By what means then do we infer the existence of Design in such cases; and are there any qualities of Form, which are in themselves expressive to us of Design and Intention? I apprehend that there are; that there are certain qualities of Form which are immediately and permanently expressive to us of these qualities of Mind, and which derive their Beauty from this Expression.

1. In this view, it will easily be observed, that the material quality which is most naturally and most powerfully expressive to

us of Design, is UNIFORMITY or REGULARITY. Wherever, in any Form, we observe this quality, we immediately infer Design. In every Form, on the contrary, where we discover a total want of this quality, we are disposed to consider it as the production of Chance, or of some Power which has operated without Thought or Intention. "In "all cases (says Dr Reid) Regularity ex-"presses Design and Art; for nothing re-"gular was ever the work of Chance." In what manner this connection is formed, whether it is derived from experience, or to be considered as an original principle of our nature, I do not inquire. It is, however, very obvious in children, at a very early age; and it may be observed, that the popular superstitions of all nations are in a great measure founded upon it; and that all uniform or regular appearances in Nature are referred by them to some intelligent mind.

The terms Regularity and Uniformity

are used so synonymously, that it is difficult to explain their difference. As far as I am able to judge, the following account of this difference is not very distant from the truth.

With regard to both terms, when applied to Forms, two things are observable. 1*st*, That they are only applied to such objects as compose a whole; and that they express a relation either between the parts of it considered separately, or among the parts considered as constituting the whole. The relations between different wholes, or the parts of different wholes, are expressed by other terms. *2dly*, That they express always similarity or resemblance of parts. With regard to Uniformity, the term itself is an evidence of it; Uniformity being nothing but similarity of Form. With regard to Regularity, it is not less evident. A regular Form, is a Form where all the parts are similar: an irregular Form, is a Form where all the parts are dissimilar. A Form

partly regular and partly irregular, is a Form where some parts are similar and others dissimilar. This is, I conceive, the literal meaning of Regularity, as applied to Forms, and what we always mean by it, when applied to natural objects. There is, however, another meaning of the term, when applied to works of Art, *viz.* the Imitation of a Model. Thus, we say, that a Pillar is regular, that a Poem is regular, that any Composition is regular, when they have the same proportions, and the same parts, which are found in the model, or prescribed by the rule. In this case, it is still the similarity of parts which constitutes Regularity; the similarity between all the parts in the Copy, and those in the original from which it is borrowed.

Considering then Regularity and Uniformity as both expressing similarity of parts in a whole, it is plain, that we may consider every Form composed of parts, either in relation to the similarity of individual

parts, or in relation to the similarity of the whole parts. In the first case, the resemblance of any two or more parts constitutes its Uniformity. In the second, the resemblance or similarity of all the parts constitutes its Regularity. Thus, we say that any two sides of a Prism are uniform, but that the Prism itself is a regular Figure; that the sides of a Cube are uniform, but the Cube itself is regular; that the sides of many of the different Crystals are uniform, but that the Crystals themselves are regular Solids.

In this view, both Uniformity and Regularity are constituted by similarity of parts; and the difference between them is, That Uniformity expresses the similarity of parts considered separately, and Regularity the similarity of parts as constituting the whole. There may therefore be Uniformity without Regularity, because there may be a similarity between any two or more parts of a Form, without a general similarity among the whole; but there cannot be Regularity without Unifor-

mity, or without this general resemblance of the whole parts to each other.

Whatever may be the truth of this explanation, it seems sufficiently obvious, that both these qualities are naturally expressive to us of Design, and that from the appearance of the one, we are disposed to infer the exertion of the other.

I believe also it will be found, that the Beauty of such qualities in Forms, arises from this Expression of DESIGN, and that they are not beautiful in themselves, independently of this Expression.

1. Whenever we know that such appearances in Nature are the effect of chance, or seem to have been produced without any design, they are not beautiful. Of this every one must have had many instances in his own experience. We often meet with Vegetable productions, which assume perfectly regular Forms, and which approach to a resemblance to Animals. However exact such a resemblance may be, or however

regular the Form, we never consider such productions as beautiful. We say only that they are curious: we run to see them as Novelties, but we never speak of their Beauty, or feel from them that Emotion of delight which Beauty excites. In many Stones, in the same manner, we often find resemblances to Vegetables, to Animals, and to the human Countenance. We never say, however, that such instances are beautiful, but that they are singular. The appearance of Regularity or Uniformity in Rocks or Mountains, or in any of the ingredients of Natural Scenery, is everywhere considered as a defect, instead of a Beauty, and is beheld with no other Emotion than that of surprise. If Uniformity or Regularity were beautiful in themselves, it is obvious, that such productions of chance would be equally beautiful with those that are produced by design.

2. It is obvious, that Uniformity is not in every case equally beautiful, and that

this Beauty is in all cases proportioned to the difficulty of its attainment, or to the more forcible Expression of Design or Skill. In simple Forms, or such as are constituted by Lines of one kind, Uniformity is beautiful but in a very small degree. Increase the number of Parts, and its Beauty increases in proportion to their Number. We are not much struck with the Uniformity of two Leaves of a Tree. The Uniformity of the whole number of Leaves is a very beautiful consideration. The Uniformity of these minute parts in every individual of the class, in every Tree of the same kind in Nature, is a consideration of still greater effect, and can scarcely be presented to the Mind, without awakening a very powerful conviction of Wisdom and Design. It is upon this principle chiefly, I apprehend, that we determine the Beauty of Mathematical Figures, when we consider them simply as Figures, without relation either to their connection with Science, or with any of the

productions of Art. An Equilateral Triangle is more beautiful than a Scalene or an Isosceles, a Square than a Rhombus, an Hexagon than a Square, an Ellipse than a Parabola, a Circle than an Ellipse; because the number of their uniform parts are greater, and their Expression of Design more complete. In general, in this subject Regular Figures are more beautiful than Irregular, and Regular Figures of a greater number of parts more beautiful than the same figures of a smaller number of parts; they cease only to be beautiful when the number of their parts is so great as to produce confusion, and of consequence to obscure the Expression of Design. It is the same principle which seems to produce the Beauty of INTRICACY. Nothing is more delightful, than in any subject where we at first perceived only confusion, to find regularity gradually emerging, and to discover, amid the apparent chaos, some uniform principle which reconciles the whole. To

reduce a number of apparently dissimilar particulars, under one general law of resemblance, as it is one of the strongest evidences of the exertion of Wisdom and Design, so it is also productive of one of the strongest Emotions of Beauty, which Design can excite.

II.

The view which I have now given of the Beauty of Regularity and Uniformity, as arising from the Expression of Design, seems also very sufficiently to account for a fact, which every one that is conversant in the history of the fine Arts must have observed; I mean the universal prevalence of Uniformity in the earlier periods of these Arts: And perhaps a general view of the progress of Taste in this respect, is the best method by which I can explain the influence of Design upon the Beauty of Forms.

1. In the Infancy of Society, when Art was first cultivated, and the attention of

Men first directed to Works of Design, it is natural to imagine, that such Forms would be employed in those Arts which were intended to please, as were most strongly expressive of Design or Skill. This would take place from two causes, 1*st*, From their ignorance of those more interesting qualities which such productions might express, and which the gradual advancement of the Arts alone could unfold; and, 2*dly*, From the peculiar value which Design or Art itself, in such periods, possessed, and the consequent admiration which it raised. When any Art was discovered among a rude People the circumstance that would most strongly affect them, would be the Art itself, and the Design or Skill which it exhibited: the real capacities or consequences of the Art, they must altogether be ignorant of. What the Artist would value himself upon would be the production of a Work of Skill. What the Spectator would admire, would be the Invention or Ingenuity of the Work-

man who was capable of imagining and executing such a Work. What the Workman, therefore, would study, would be to give his Work as full and complete an Expression of this Skill or Design as he could. He would naturally, therefore, give it the appearance of perfect Uniformity. In proportion as it had this appearance, it would more or less testify the exertion of this Skill, and of consequence more or less excite the admiration of the Spectator. The circumstance of Art itself, would thus naturally prevail over every other Expression of Form; and the value as well as the uncommonness of such talents would give to Uniformity a degree of Beauty, which it is perhaps difficult for those to imagine, who are accustomed to the advancement of the Arts in a polished Age. How naturally all this would take place, may still, however, be seen in the Tastes and opinions of Children. What they perpetually admire is Uniformity and Regularity. The first little essays

they make in art, are all distinguished by this Character; the opinion they form of the Value or Beauty of any object that is shewn to them, is from the prevalence of Uniformity in its Composition; and the triumph which they display, when they are able to produce any kind of Regularity in their little productions, very sufficiently indicates the connection that subsists in their Minds, between such Qualities and the Expression of Design.

In the earlier periods of Society, therefore, it seems reasonable to imagine, that all those Arts which were directed only to Ornament, or to the production of Beauty, should employ, in preference to all others, the admired Form; and that the Artist should attempt to give to everything that constituted the fine Arts of such an Age, that Uniformity, which was expressive of the Quality most valued, and most admired among them. It is found, accordingly, that this is the fact; and that the Form,

which, in such periods, universally characterizes the productions of infant Taste, is Uniformity or Regularity.

The first appearance of the Arts of Sculpture and Painting, has, in every country, been distinguished by this character. The earliest attempts to imitate the human Form, could have little merit as an Imitation, and could be valued only for the Skill and Dexterity they appeared, at such a period, to exhibit. What the Spectator admired, was not so much the Resemblance to Man, as the Invention and Art which produced this Resemblance; what the Artist therefore would study, would be to make his work as expressive of this skill as possible. He could, however, do this in no way so surely, as by the production of Uniformity, by making choice of an attitude in which both sides of the body were perfectly similar, and every article of drapery, &c. upon the one side, having a correspondent article of the same kind upon the other. Such a

work, carried with it immediately the conviction of design, and would of course excite the admiration of an Age to which Design was not familiar. The figures of the Gods, and of the Heroes of rude nations, are accordingly represented by every Traveller, as fashioned in this manner; and whoever will take the trouble of reading the Abbé Winkelman's laborious History of Ancient Sculpture, will find that the earliest period even of Grecian Art, was distinguished by the same Character.

As the favourite Form of such an Age would be Regularity, the first step of the progress of the Art would naturally consist in the greater perfection of this Form, in the higher finishing of the Parts, and in the increase of their Number. It is at this period that the Egyptian Sculpture seems to have stopped; the accuracy and the delicacy of its workmanship appear not to have been exceeded by any other People; but the possibility of adding Variety to Uniformity,

or of copying the more graceful attitudes of the human Form, seems either to have been unknown or unattempted among them. From what cause this peculiarity arose, it is now difficult to explain; if it may not be conceived to have been the effect of a law of Religion, by which the Artists were forbidden to give any other appearance or attitude to the objects of their worship, than those which were to be found in their ancient Sculptures. Every History of Painting sufficiently shews, that the first periods of this Art have been uniformly distinguished by the same Character.

The Art of Gardening seems to have been governed, and long governed by the same Principle. When men first began to consider a Garden as a subject capable of Beauty, or of bestowing any distinction upon its possessor, it was natural that they should endeavour to render its Form as different as possible from that of the country around it; and to mark to the Spectator,

as strongly as they could, both the design and the labour which they had bestowed upon it. Irregular Forms, however convenient or agreeable, might still be the production of Nature; but Forms perfectly regular, and Divisions completely uniform, immediately excited the belief of Design, and with this belief, all the admiration which follows the employment of Skill, or even of Expence. That this Principle would naturally lead the first Artists in Gardening to the production of Uniformity, may easily be conceived, as even at present, when so different a system of Gardening prevails, the common People universally follow the first System; and even the Men of the best Taste, in the cultivation of waste or neglected lands, still enclose them by uniform Lines, and in regular Divisions, as more immediately signifying, what they wish should be signified, their Industry or Spirit in their improvement.

As gardens, however, are both a costly

and permanent subject, and are of consequence less liable to the influence of Fashion, this Taste would not easily be altered: and the principal improvements which they would receive, would consist rather in the greater employment of uniformity and expence, than in the introduction of any new Design. The whole History of Antiquity, accordingly, contains not, I believe, a single instance where this character was deviated from, in a spot considered solely as a garden; and till within the last century, and in this country, it seems not anywhere to have been imagined, that a garden was capable of any other Beauty, than what might arise from Utility, and from the display of Art and Design. It deserves also further to be remarked, that the additional ornaments of gardening, have in every country partaken of the same character, and have been directed to the purpose of increasing the appearance and the Beauty of Art and of Design. Hence Jet d'Eaus, artificial Foun-

tains, regular Cascades, Trees in the form of Animals, &c. have in all countries been the principal ornaments of gardening. The violation of the usual appearances of Nature in such objects, strongly exhibited the employment of Art. They accorded perfectly, therefore, with the character which the scene was intended to have; and they increased its Beauty as they increased the effect of that quality upon which this Beauty was founded, and intended to be founded.

The same principle which has thus influenced the Taste of men in the earlier periods of Society, with regard to Sculpture and Gardening, appears to have extended to every other Art which was employed in the Beauty of Form. The Art of Dancing, one of the Fine Arts of a rude people, and which is capable indeed of being one of the Fine Arts of the most improved people, is distinguished in its first periods by the same character, and from the same cause. The common or general motions of the human

body are acquired in so early infancy, and are performed with so little reflection, that they appear to be more the exertion of a natural power, than an acquisition of labour or art. When men then first began to take pleasure in the exertion of their agility, and to expect praise or admiration for their skill, it is obvious, that the motions and gestures which they would adopt, would be such as were farthest removed from the natural or easy motions of the body, and which from this difference were most strongly expressive of the address or agility of the Dancer. Hence naturally arose the invention of all those uniform attitudes, in which the two sides of the body were rendered perfectly correspondent; those artificial gestures, in which the same motion of the limbs is repeated, without any change of place: and, as the art advanced, those regular figures in which the same Form is perpetually described; and those more complicated dances in which a number of performers are en-

gaged in repeating some intricate figure within a definite interval. Such gestures and figures, as essentially different from the usual gestures of the body, were immediately expressive both of Design and of Skill. The performer would study to excel in them. The spectator would admire him in proportion as he did excel; and hence the Art would almost necessarily assume the same character of Regularity or Uniformity that distinguished the other Arts which were destined to please.

It would be very easy to illustrate the same observation, from a variety of other particulars in the ornamental Forms of rude nations, if it did not lead to a very minute, and I believe a very unnecessary investigation. The Reader will perhaps however forgive me, if I avail myself of this opportunity to hazard a conjecture, Whether the same principle is not the cause of the invention of Rhyme and Measure in Poetry? and whether it may not serve to account for a very re-

markable fact that every one is acquainted with, *viz.* The Precedence of Poetical to Prosaic Composition.

The use of language is acquired so early in life, and is practised upon common occasions with so little study or thought, that it appears to a rude people, as it does to the common people of every country, rather as an inherent power of our nature, than as an acquisition of labour or study; and upon such occasions, is considered as no more expressive of Design or Skill, than the notes of birds, or the cries of animals. When therefore men first began to think of Composition, and to expect admiration from their skill in it, they would very naturally endeavour to make it as expressive as they could of this Skill, by distinguishing it as much as possible from common language. There was no way so obvious for this, as by the production of some kind of Regularity or Uniformity; by the production either of Regularity in the succession of these Sounds,

or of Uniformity or Resemblance in the Sounds themselves. Such qualities in Composition would immediately suggest the belief of Skill and Design, and would of consequence excite all that admiration, which, in the commencement of every Art, such qualities so strongly and so justly raise. The same cause, therefore, which induced the Sculptor to give to his performances that Form, which was most strongly expressive of his skill, would induce the Poet to employ that Regularity or Uniformity of Sound, which was most immediately expressive also of his Skill, and which was most likely to excite the admiration of his people. Rhyme or Measure then (according to the nature of the language, and the superior difficulty of either) would naturally come to be the constituent mark of Poetry, or of that species of Composition which was destined to affect or to please. It would be the simplest resource which the Poet could fall upon, to distinguish his pro-

ductions from common language; and it would accordingly please, just in proportion to the perfection of its Regularity, or to the degree in which it was expressive of his labour and skill. The greater and more important characteristics of the Art a rude people must necessarily be unacquainted with; and what would naturally constitute the distinction to them between Poetry and common language, would be the appearance of Uniformity or Regularity in the one, and the want of them in the other.

As thus, the first instances of Composition would be distinguished by some species of Uniformity, every kind of Composition would gradually borrow, or come to be distinguished by the same character. If it was necessary for the Poet to study Rhyme or Measure, to distinguish his verses from common language, it would be equally necessary for the Lawgiver to study the same in the Composition of his Laws, and the

Sage in the Composition of his Aphorisms. Without this character, they had no distinction from usual or familiar Expression: they had no mark by which they might be known to be the fruit of Thought or Reflection, instead of the immediate effusion of Fancy. Before the invention of writing, the only expedient by which it seems possible that Composition could be distinguished from common language, must have been some species of Uniformity or Regularity, which might immediately convey the belief of Art or Design, and thus separate it from that vulgar language, which appeared to imply neither. It is hence that, in every country, proverbs, or the ancient maxims of wisdom, are distinguished by Alliteration, or Measure, or some other artifice of a like nature; that in many countries the earliest laws have been written in verse; and, in general, that the artificial Composition which is now appropriated to Poetry alone, and distinguished by the name of

Poetical Composition, was naturally the prevailing character of Composition, and applied to every subject which was the fruit of labour or meditation; as the mark, and indeed the only mark that then could be given, of the employment of this labour and meditation.

The invention of Writing occasioned a very great revolution in Composition. What was written, was of itself expressive of Design. Prose, therefore, when written, was equally expressive of Design with Verse or Rhyme; and the restraints which these imposed, led men naturally to forsake that artificial Composition, which now no longer had the value it bore, before this invention. The discovery of writing, seems therefore naturally to have led to Composition in Prose. It might be expected also, that the same cause should have freed Poetry from the restraints with which the ignorance or the necessities of a rude Age had thus shackled it; and that

the great distinctions of Imagery, of Enthusiasm, of being directed to the Imagination, instead of the Understanding, &c. should have been sufficient distinctions of it from prosaic Composition, without preserving those rude inventions, which were founded solely upon the Expression of Art. There are, however, two causes which serve to prevent this natural effect, and which it is probable will everywhere continue to appropriate Rhyme or Measure to poetical Composition. 1*st*, The permanence of poetical Models, and the irresistible prejudice we have in their favour, even from no other cause than their antiquity: and, *2dly*, The real difficulty of the Art itself, which, in opposition to the general history of Art, remains still as difficult, and perhaps more so, than in the first periods of its cultivation; and which of consequence renders it still as much the object of admiration, as when it first began to be cultivated. The generality of men judge of Poetry by the perfection or

imperfection of its Rhymes; and the art or skill of the Poet in the management of them, constitutes a very great share of the pleasure they have in the perusal of it.

Whatever truth there may be in this conjecture, with regard to the Origin of Rhyme and Measure, it is a fact sufficiently certain, that the first periods of the history of the Fine Arts, are distinguished by Uniformity and Regularity; and perhaps the observations which I have offered may lead the Reader to believe, that this arises from the early, and perhaps instinctive association we have of such qualities in Form, with Design and Skill, and the great and peculiar value they necessarily have in such a period of society.

2. When, however, the Fine Arts have made this progress, circumstances arise which alter in a great measure the Taste of mankind, and introduce a different opinion with regard to the Beauty of Design. Two causes more especially conspire to this.

1*st*, The discovery that is gradually made, that other and more affecting qualities are capable of being expressed by Forms, than that of mere Design: and, 2*dly*, The progress of the Arts themselves, which naturally renders easy what at first was difficult, and, of consequence, renders the production of Regularity or Uniformity less forcibly the Sign of Skill than at first. Both tend immediately to the introduction of VARIETY.

When the Painter and Sculptor, for instance, had advanced so far in their Art, as to be able to imitate exactly the Form of the human Body, it could not well be long before they applied themselves to particular imitations of it. Some Forms are beautiful, others not. They would study therefore to imitate the former; and perhaps endeavour to investigate what circumstances constituted the difference between such cases. The imitation of the beautiful, from the imitation of mere Form, was itself a great step

in the Art, but was of still greater consequence in leading to another. Beautiful Forms were more beautiful in one attitude than in another, under the influence of some passions or affections, than under the influence of others. To imitate such objects, therefore, it was necessary to study, not only the general Beauty of Form, but such Attitudes and Expressions, as were the signs of such Passions or Affections. The most beautiful Forms in real Life, were still in some respects deficient, and it was difficult to find instances, where such Forms might display the most beautiful Attitudes or Expressions. The imagination of the Painter or the Sculptor, could alone supply this want; he would endeavour by degrees, therefore, to unite the Beauty of Form with the Beauty of Expression; and would thus gradually ascend to the conception of Ideal Beauty, and to the production of Form and of Attitude, more beautiful than any that were to be found in Na-

ture itself. In these various steps, the Uniformity of the earlier Ages would insensibly be deserted. Beautiful Attitudes have little Uniformity, and in the Expression of Passion or Affection, every Variety of Form must be introduced which takes place in real Life. The Artist, therefore, would not only be under the necessity of introducing Variety, but the admiration of the Spectator would necessarily keep pace with its Introduction; both because the expression which his Forms now assumed was of itself much more pleasing and interesting than the mere expression of Design, and because this Variety was in fact now significant of greater Skill and Dexterity in the Artist, than the mere Uniformity of the former Age. In those Arts, therefore, Variety of Form would not only be considered as expressive of design; but as what distinguished the Old and the Modern School, was the Uniformity of the one, and the Variety of the other, it would be considered as the

peculiar sign of elegant or of improved Design.

In all the other Arts, which were either directed to the production of Beauty of Form, or which were susceptible of it, the same causes would produce the same effect. In all of them, in proportion as the Art was cultivated, the difficulty of it would decrease; the same Form which was beautiful, and solely beautiful, when the circumstance of Art or Skill only was considered, would every day become less beautiful as that Skill became more common;—the natural rivalship of Artists would lead them to deviate from this principle of Uniformity, and by the introduction of some degree of Variety, to give greater proofs of their Art and Dexterity:—it would not fail to be observed, that in such inventions some were more beautiful or more pleasing than others: some farther qualities, therefore, would be sought for in Forms, than that which was merely expressive of Design; the Forms

which were beautiful in Nature, would be imitated in the productions of Art; succeeding Ages would gradually refine upon these beginnings of Improvement; until, at last, the most common Forms would receive all that degree of Beauty, which was consistent with their usefulness or ends.

The Forms, however, that are beautiful in Nature, are, in general, such as are distinguished by Variety. In the imitation of them, Variety would necessarily be introduced. The imitation of such Forms, the application of them to common objects, was, in itself, more laborious, more difficult, and demanded more skill in the Artist, than the production of mere Uniformity. The Variety, therefore, which took place in this period of the Arts, would naturally become the sign of improved or of elegant Design, as Uniformity had formerly been the sign of Design itself; and as the one distinguished the rude period of these Arts, and the other the improved and elegant one, Uni-

formity in this, as in the former case, would come to be considered as the sign of rude or imperfect Design, and Variety, of that which was refined and cultivated. The application of these principles to the different Arts, which are conversant in the Beauty of Form, is far beyond the limit of these observations.

By such means as these, by the imitation of Nature, by the invention which rivalship would naturally excite, and by the natural progress of Art itself, Variety would gradually be introduced; in different degrees indeed in different Arts, according to their nature, and the costliness and permanence of the subjects upon which they were employed, but still in all in some degree, and according to the measure in which they admitted of it. As it thus also became the principal visible distinction between the rude and the improved state of these Arts, it would become the sign of this improvement and refinement; the excellence of the

Artist would, in a great degree, be measured by the proportion of it which he was capable of giving to his works; and as the love of Uniformity had distinguished the earlier periods of Society, the love of Variety would, from the same cause, distinguish the periods of cultivation and refinement. It is found, accordingly, that this is the great characteristic of the taste of polished Ages: And so strong is this principle, that wherever, in the Arts of any country, Variety is found to predominate, it may be safely inferred, that they have long been cultivated in that country; as, on the other hand, wherever the love of Uniformity prevails, it may with equal safety be inferred, that they are in that country but in the first stage of their improvement.

There is one Art, however, in which the same effect seems to have arisen from very different causes. The variety which distinguishes the Modern Art of Gardening in this island, beautiful as it undoubtedly is,

appears not, however, to be equally natural to this Art, as it has been shown to be to others. It is, at least, of a very late origin: it is to be found in no other country: and those nations of antiquity, who had carried the Arts of Taste to the greatest perfection which they have ever yet attained, while they had arrived at Beauty in every other species of Form, seem never to have imagined, that the principle of Variety was applicable to Gardening, or to have deviated in any respect from the Regularity or Uniformity of their ancestors.

Nor does it indeed seem to be either a very natural or a very obvious invention. A Garden is a spot surrounding or contiguous to a house, and cultivated for the convenience or pleasure of the family. When Men began first to ornament such a spot, it was natural that they should do with it, as they did with the house to which it was subordinate, *viz.* by giving it every possible appearance of Uniformity, to shew that

they had bestowed labour and expence upon the improvement of it. In the countries that were most proper for Gardening, in those distinguished by a fine climate and a beautiful scenery, this labour and expence could in fact in no other way be expressed than by the production of such Uniformity. To imitate the Beauty of Nature in the small scale of a Garden, would have been ridiculous in a country, where this Beauty was to be found upon the great scale of Nature; and for what purpose should they bestow labour or expence, for which every Man expects credit, in erecting a scene, which, as it could be little superior to the general scenery around them, could of consequence but little communicate to the Spectator the belief of this labour or this expence having been bestowed? The Beauty of Landscape, Nature had sufficiently provided. The Beauty, therefore, that was left for Man to create, was the Beauty of Convenience or Magnificence; both of them

dependent upon the employment of Art and Expence, and both of them best expressed by such Forms, as immediately signified the employment of such means. In such a situation, therefore, it does not seem natural, that men should think of proceeding in this Art beyond the first and earliest Forms which it had acquired; or that any further improvement should be attempted in it, than merely in the extension of the scale of this Design.

In this view, I cannot help thinking, that the Modern Taste in Gardening, (or what Mr Walpole very justly, and very emphatically calls the Art of creating Landscape), owes its origin to two circumstances, which may at first appear paradoxical, *viz.* To the accidental circumstance of our taste in Natural Beauty being founded upon foreign models; and to the difference or inferiority of the scenery of our own country, to that which we were accustomed peculiarly to admire.

The influence of these circumstances will be perhaps sufficiently obvious to those who recollect, that the Compositions which serve most early, and indeed most universally, to fix our Taste in this respect, are those which have been produced in Italy and Greece; in countries much superior to our own, in the articles of climate and of natural Beauty; which are almost sacred in our imaginations, from the events by which they have been distinguished; and which, besides all this, have an additional charm to us, from the very Compositions in which they are celebrated. The poems of Homer and Theocritus, of Virgil and Horace, have been now for a considerable length of time, the first poetical Compositions to which the youth of modern Europe are accustomed; and they have influenced accordingly, in a very sensible degree, the Taste of all those who have been so early engaged in the study of them. Besides this, the effect of Painting, and particularly of Landscape-

Painting, has been very great, both in awakening our Taste to natural Beauty, and in determining it. The great masters in this Art have been principally Italians: men who were born amid scenes of distinguished Beauty, who passed their lives in copying those features either of real or of adventitious Expression with which Italy presented them; and whose works have disseminated, in every country where they found their way, the admiration of the scenes which they copied. From both these causes, and from the strong prejudice, which, since the revival of letters, we so early and so deeply feel, in favour of everything that relates to Grecian or to Roman Antiquity, the Imagery of Italian Scenery had got strongly the possession of our imagination. Our first impressions of the Beauty of Nature had been gained from the Compositions which delineated such scenery; and we were gradually accustomed to

consider them as the standard of Natural Beauty.

With these impressions, it was very natural for the inhabitants of a country, of which the scenery, however beautiful in itself, was yet in many respects very different from that which they were accustomed to consider as solely or supremely beautiful, to attempt to imitate what they did not possess; to import, as it were, the beauties which were not of their own growth: and in fact to create, according to Mr Walpole's vigorous expression, that scenery which Nature and Fortune had denied them.

Such improvements, however, as extremely expensive, could not be at first upon a very large scale. They could, for various reasons occupy only that spot of ground which surrounded the house: and as they thus supplanted what had formerly been the garden, they came very naturally to be considered only as another species of garden-

ing. A scene of so peculiar a kind, could not well unite with the country around. It would gradually therefore extend, so as to embrace all the ground that was within view, or in the possession of the improver. From the garden, therefore, it naturally extended to the park, which became therefore also the subject of this new, but very fortunate mode of improvement. And thus, from the nature of modern education, and the habit we are in of receiving our first rudiments of Taste from foreign models, together with the admiration which so many causes have conspired to excite in our minds with regard to antiquity, seems very probably to have arisen that modern Taste in Gardening, which is so different from every other that men have followed, and which has tended so much to the ornament of this country.

It is to be observed also, in confirmation of what I have said, that the first attempts of this kind in England, were very far from

being an imitation of the general scenery of Nature. It was solely the imitation of Italian scenery: and it is not improbable, that they who first practised the Art, were themselves ignorant of the possible Beauties which it at length might acquire. Statues, Temples, Urns, Ruins, Colonnades, &c. were the first ornaments of all such scenes. Whatever distinguished the real scenes of Nature in Italy, was here employed in artificial scenery, with the most thoughtless profusion; and the object of the Art in general, was the creation not of Natural, but of Italian Landscape. The fine Satire of Mr Pope upon this subject, is a sufficient proof of the degree to which this Fashion was carried; and it deserves to be remarked, to the honour of his Taste, that he so soon saw the possible Beauties of this infant Art, and was so superior to the universal prejudices upon the subject.

It was but a short step, however, from this state of the Art, to the pursuit of ge-

69316

neral Beauty. The great step had already been made, in the destruction of the regular Forms which constituted the former system of Gardening, and in the imitation of Nature, which, although foreign, and very different from the appearances or the character of Nature in our own country, was yet still the imitation of Nature. The profusion with which Temples, Ruins, Statues, and all the other adventitious articles of Italian scenery was lavished, became soon ridiculous. The destruction of these, it was found, did not destroy the Beauty of Landscape. The power of simple Nature was felt and acknowledged, and the removal of the articles of acquired expression, led men only more strongly to attend to the natural Expression of Scenery, and to study the means by which it might be maintained or improved. The publication also, at this time, of the Seasons of Thomson, in the opinion of a very competent judge*, contributed in no

* Dr Warton.

small degree, both to influence and to direct the Taste of men in this Art. The peculiar merit of the work itself, the singular felicity of its descriptions, and above all, the fine Enthusiasm which it displays, and which it is so fitted to excite, with regard to the works of Nature, were most singularly adapted to promote the growth of an infant Art, which had for its object the production of natural Beauty; and by diffusing everywhere both the admiration of Nature, and the knowledge of its Expression, prepared, in a peculiar degree, the minds of men in general, both to feel the effects, and to judge of the fidelity of those scenes in which it was imitated. By these means, and by the singular genius of some late masters, the Art of Gardening has gradually ascended from the pursuit of particular, to the pursuit of general Beauty; to realize whatever the fancy of the Painter has imagined, and to create a scenery, more pure, more harmonious, and more expressive, than

any that is to be found in Nature itself.

From the slight view which I have now given of the progress of those Arts which respect the Beauty of Form, the Reader may perhaps be satisfied, that this progress itself produces a difference in the sentiments of men, with regard to the Beauty of Design, and to those material qualities in Forms, which are expressive of it; that the same degree of Art or Skill which is the object of admiration in an early age, ceases to be so, in an age of greater improvement; and that hence as UNIFORMITY is the distinguishing Form of Beauty in the first periods of these Arts, VARIETY is, from the same cause, in the latter.

These qualities, however, though in a great measure characteristic of the rude and the improved periods of the Arts, are neither opposite nor irreconcileable. In every perfect Form of Beauty they must be united;

and the same quality of Design or Skill which is the foundation of their Beauty, affords also the law of their union.

Every work of Art supposes Unity of Design, or some one end which the Artist had in view in its structure or composition. In Forms, however, considered simply as expressive of Design, and without any other relation, the only possible Sign of unity of Design, is Uniformity or Regularity. It is this which alone distinguishes the productions of Chance, from those of Design: and without the appearance of this, Variety is confessedly only Confusion.

In every beautiful work of Art, something more than mere Design is demanded, *viz.* Elegant or embellished Design. The only material Sign of this is Variety. It is this which distinguishes, in general, beautiful from plain forms; and without this, in some degree, Uniformity is only dulness and insipidity. Beautiful Forms, therefore, must necessarily be composed both of Uni-

formity and Variety; and this union will be perfect, when the proportion of Uniformity does not encroach upon the Beauty of Embellishment, and the proportion of Variety does not encroach upon the Beauty of Unity.

Considering, therefore, Forms in this light, as beautiful merely from their Expression of Design, the observation of Dr Hutcheson may perhaps be considered as an Axiom with regard to their Beauty, *viz.* That where the Uniformity is equal, the Beauty of Forms is in proportion to their Variety; and when their Variety is equal, their Beauty is in proportion to their Uniformity; that is, according to the view which I have now presented to the Reader, when the Unity of Design is equal, the Beauty of Forms will be in proportion to their Embellishment; and when the Embellishment of Forms is equal, their Beauty will be in proportion to the Unity of their Design.

III.

In the view which I have now presented to the Reader, the qualities of Uniformity and Variety are considered as beautiful from their Expression of Design. In the preceding section, on the other hand, these qualities are considered as beautiful from the effect of their Composition, in maintaining and promoting the Emotion which the subject itself is capable of exciting. That these qualities are in fact beautiful from both these causes; that their Composition is in some cases beautiful from being expressive of the Skill and Taste of the Artist; and in others, from being correspondent to the Character or Expression of the subject, are propositions so obvious, that I will not detain the Reader by any illustration of them. The confounding of these distinct Expressions, has also, I believe, been the cause of the greater part of mistakes which have

been made in the investigation of the Beauty of these qualities.

The Beauty of these Expressions, however, is very different; and as it is in the power of the Artist, either to sacrifice the Beauty of Design to that of Character or Expression, or to sacrifice the Beauty of Character to that of Design, there is not perhaps any circumstance of more importance to him, or to the Arts of Taste in general, than a proper comprehension of the difference of this Beauty, and of the great superiority which the one has over the other. The superiority of the Beauty of Expression or Character, seems to consist in three things. 1*st*, In the greater and more affecting Emotion, which is produced by it, than what is produced by the mere expression of Design. 2*dly*, In this Beauty being more universally felt, as being dependent only upon Sensibility, while the Beauty of Design is felt only fully by those who are proficients in the Art, and who are

able accordingly to judge of the Skill or Taste which is displayed: and, *3dly*, In the permanence of this Beauty, as arising from certain invariable principles of our Nature, while the Beauty of Design is dependent upon the period of the Art, in which it is displayed, and ceases to be beautiful, when the Art has made a farther progress either in improvement or decline. In all those Arts, therefore, that have for their object the production of beautiful Forms, it may be considered as a first and fundamental principle, That the Expression of Design should be subject to the Expression of Character; and, that in every Form, the proportion of Uniformity and Variety, which the Artist should study, ought to be that which is accommodated to the nature of this Character, and not to the expression of his own Dexterity or Skill. As in the Mechanical Arts, whose object is utility, and in which the ability of the Artist is more surely displayed by the production of useful

Form, it would be absurd in him to sacrifice this utility to the display of his own dexterity or address; so in the Arts of Taste, whose object is Beauty, and in which the Taste or Genius of the Artist is in like manner most surely displayed by the production of beautiful Form, it is equally absurd to sacrifice the superior Beauty of Character or Expression, to that meaner and less permanent Beauty, which may arise from the display of his own ability or art.

However obvious or important the principle which I have now stated may be, the fine Arts have been unfortunately governed by a very different principle; and the undue preference which Artists are naturally disposed to give to the display of Design, has been one of the most powerful causes of that decline and degeneracy which has uniformly marked the history of the fine Arts, after they have arrived at a certain period of perfection. To a common Spec-

tator, the great test of excellence in beautiful Forms is Character or Expression, or, in other words, the appearance of some interesting or affecting quality in the Form itself. To the Artist, on the other hand, the great test of excellence is Skill; the production of something new in point of Design, or difficult in point of Execution. It is by the Expression of Character, therefore, that the generality of Men determine the Beauty of Forms. It is by the Expression of Design, that the Artist determines it. When, therefore, the Arts which are conversant in the Beauty of Form; have attained to that fortunate stage of their progress, when this Expression of Character is itself the great Expression of Design, the Invention and Taste of the Artist take, almost necessarily, a different direction. When his excellence can no longer be distinguished by the production of merely beautiful or expressive Form, he is naturally led to distinguish it by the production of what is un-

common or difficult; to signalize his works by the fertility of his invention, or the dexterity of his execution; and thus gradually to forget the end of his art, in his attention to display his superiority in the Art itself. While the Artist thus insensibly deviates from the true principles of Composition, other causes unfortunately tend to mislead also the Taste of the public. In the Mechanical Arts, whose object is Utility, this Utility is itself the principle by which we determine the perfection of every production: Utility, however, is a permanent principle, and necessarily renders our opinion of this perfection as permanent. In the Fine Arts, whose object is Beauty, it is by its effect upon our imagination alone, that we determine the excellence of any production. There is no quality, however, which has a more powerful effect upon our imagination than Novelty. The Taste of the generality of mankind, therefore, very naturally falls in with the invention of the

Artist, and is gratified by that continued production of Novelty which the Art affords to it. In the Mechanical Arts, which are directed to general utility, all men are in some measure judges of the excellence of their productions, because they are in some measure judges of this Utility. But in the Fine Arts, which seem to require peculiar talents, and which require at least talents that are not generally exerted, all men neither are, nor conceive themselves to be judges. They willingly therefore submit their opinions to the guidance of those, who, by their practice in these arts, appear very naturally the most competent to judge with regard to their Beauty; and while the Arts amuse them with perpetual novelty, very readily take for granted, that what is new is also beautiful. By these means; by the preference which Artists are so naturally disposed to give to the Expression of Design, above the Expression of Character; by the nature of these Arts themselves,

which afford no permanent principle of judging; and by the disposition of men in general to submit their opinions to the opinions of those who have the strongest propensity and the greatest interest in their corruption, have the Arts of Taste, in every country, after a certain period of perfection, degenerated into the mere Expressions of the skill and Execution of the Artist, and gradually sunk into a state of barbarity, almost as great as that from which they at first arose. "Alit æmulatio ingenia, (says "Velleius Paterculus, in speaking of the "same subject), et nunc invidia, nunc admiratio incitationem accendit; naturaque "quod summo studio petitum est, adscendit in summum, difficilisque in perfecto "mora est: naturaliterque quod procedere "non potest, recedit; et ut primo, ad consequendos quos priores ducimus, accendimur, ita, ubi aut præteriri aut æquari eos "posse desperavimus, studium cum spe senescit, et quod assequi non potest, sequi

" desinit; et velut occupatam relinquens " materiam, quærit novam; præteritoque " eo, in quo eminere non possumus, ali- " quid in quo nitamur conquirimus."—*Vell. Patercul. L.* 1. *ad fin.*

Nor is this melancholy progress peculiar to those Arts which respect the Beauty of Form. The same causes extend to every other of those Arts which are employed in the production of Beauty; and they who are acquainted with the History of the Fine Arts of Antiquity, will recollect, that the History of Statuary, of Painting, of Music, of Poetry, and of Prose Composition, have been alike distinguished, in their later periods, by the same gradual desertion of the End of the Art, for the display of the Art itself; and by the same prevalence of the Expression of Design, over the Expression of the Composition in which it was employed. It has been seldom found in the history of any of these Arts, that the Artist, like the great Master of Painting in

this country*, has united the Philosophy with the practice of his Art, and regulated his own sublime inventions, by the chaste principles of Truth and Science.

For an error, which so immediately arises from the nature, and from the practice of these Arts themselves, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to find a remedy. Whether (as I am willing to believe) there may not be circumstances in the modern state of Europe, which may serve to check at least, this unfortunate progression; whether the beautiful Models of Antiquity in every Art, may not serve to fix in some degree the Standard of Taste in these Arts; whether the progress of Philosophy and Criticism may not tend to introduce greater stability, as well as greater delicacy of Taste; and whether the general diffusion of Science, by increasing in so great a proportion the number of judges, may not rescue these Arts from the sole dominion of the Artists,

* Sir Joshua Reynolds.

and thus establish more just and philosophical principles of decision, it is far beyond the limits of these Essays to inquire. But I humbly conceive, that there is no rule of Criticism more important in itself, or more fitted to preserve the Taste of the Individual, or of the Public, than to consider every Composition as faulty and defective, in which the Expression of the Art is more striking than the Expression of the Subject, or in which the Beauty of Design prevails over the Beauty of Character or Expression.

PART II.

Of the Influence of Fitness upon the Beauty of Forms.

I.

The second source of the relative Beauty of Forms is FITNESS, or the proper Adaptation of Means to an End.

That this Quality in Forms is productive of the Emotion of Beauty, every one must probably have perceived. In the Forms of Furniture, of Machines, and of Instruments in the different Arts, the greater part of their Beauty arises from this consideration; nor is there any Form which does not become beautiful, where it is found to be perfectly adapted to its End. "A ship which "is well built, and which promises to sail "well, says Mr Hogarth, is called by sai- "lors a Beauty." In every other profession, in like manner, all Machines or Instruments are called beautiful by the Artists, which are well adapted to the end of their Arts. Even the most common and disregarded articles of convenience, are felt as beautiful, when we forget their familiarity, and consider them only in relation to the purposes they serve.

That Fitness is not the only source of Beauty in Forms, is sufficiently obvious. But I apprehend the elegant and ingenious

Author of the " Essay upon the Sublime " and Beautiful," has yielded too much to the love of System, when he will not allow it to be any source of Beauty at all. The common experience and common language of mankind are at variance with this opinion, nor does it seem to be sufficiently supported by any of the instances he brings. " On this principle (says he) the wedge-like " snout of the Swine, the little sunk eyes, " and the whole make of the head, so well " adapted to its offices of digging and root- " ing, would be extremely beautiful. The " great bag hanging to the bill of the Peli- " can, a thing likewise highly useful to this " animal, would be likewise as beautiful in " our eyes. The Hedge-hog, so well secur- " ed against all assaults by his prickly hide, " and the Porcupine, with his missile quills, " would be then considered as creatures of " no small elegance. There are few ani- " mals whose parts are better contrived " than those of the Monkey. He has the

" hands of a man, joined to the springy " limbs of a beast: he is admirably calcu- " lated for running, leaping, grappling, and " climbing: and yet there are few animals " which seem to have less beauty in the " eyes of all mankind," &c. In these instances, and in all the others he mentions, it is clear, that the animals are not, in general, considered as beautiful: but, if I am not deceived, the reason of this is, not that the Fitness of their construction is not a consideration capable of producing the Emotion of Beauty, but that in general we never consider the animals in the light of this fitness of their construction. Such Forms are not naturally beautiful, or have none of those ingredients which were before mentioned as constituting the natural Beauty of Forms. It is the natural Beauty of Forms, however, which first strikes us, because it demands neither any previous knowledge, nor any fixed attention. Such animals, besides, have many unpleasing

qualities from their instincts, their characters, and their modes of life. It is in the light of these qualities, however, that we generally consider them; because painful or disagreeable qualities much more suddenly, as well as more powerfully affect us, than qualities of an opposite kind. Whenever, however, we can prevail upon ourselves to disregard these unpleasing considerations, and to consider the animals in the light of the Fitness of their construction, I believe it is agreeable to every man's experience, that their Forms become then, in some degree, objects of Beauty. To say at first, that the head of the Swine was a beautiful Form, might perhaps expose the person who asserted it to ridicule; but if the admirable Fitness of its construction, for the necessities of the animal, are explained, there is no person who will not feel, from this view of it, an Emotion of Beauty. There is nothing more common, accordingly, in books of Anatomy, or Na-

tural History, than the term of Beauty applied to many common, and many disagreeable parts of the animal Frame: nor is there any Reader, who considers the subjects in the light of their fitness alone, who does not feel the same Emotion with the Writers. A Physician talks even of a beautiful Theory of Dropsies or Fevers, a Surgeon of a beautiful Instrument for operations, an Anatomist of a beautiful Subject or Preparation. The rest of the world, indeed, hear this language with some degree of astonishment. It is in the light only of Horror or Disgust that such objects appear to them; but to the Artists these qualities have long disappeared, and the only light in which they regard them, is their Fitness for the purposes of their Arts. These instances are perhaps sufficient to show, that even the objects which are most destitute of Natural Beauty, become beautiful, when they are regarded only in the light of their Fitness; and that the reason why they do

not always appear beautiful to us, is, that we in general leave this quality out of our consideration. That pleasing or agreeable Forms receive Beauty from their Fitness; and that the most perfect Form of Natural Beauty may receive additional Beauty from its being wisely adapted to some End, are facts too obvious to require any illustration. It is only to be observed, that this quality, in its effect of producing the Emotion of Beauty, is subject to the same limitations with every other quality of Emotion. Such qualities, when either familiar or minute, fail in producing an Emotion sufficiently strong to be the foundation of Beauty; and as the Emotion which we receive from Fitness, is in itself greatly inferior to many other Emotions of Pleasure, there are perhaps more instances, where this quality is observed, without the sentiment of Beauty, than in most other qualities of a similar kind with which we are acquainted. Unless when it is either great or new, the ge-

nerality of men feel little Beauty in any Expression of Fitness.

II.

Of the Beauty of Proportion.

I apprehend also, that the Beauty of PROPORTION in Forms is to be ascribed to this cause; and that certain Proportions affect us with the Emotion of Beauty, not from any original capacity in such qualities to excite this Emotion, but from their being expressive to us of the Fitness of the parts to the End designed. It is impossible for me, within the bounds which I prescribe myself, to enter fully into the investigation of the nature of Proportion. All I intend is, to produce some of the considerations which induce me to join with Mr Hogarth in this conclusion.

1. I conceive, that the Emotion of pleasure which Proportion affords, has no re-

semblance to any pleasure of sensation, but that it resembles that feeling of satisfaction which we have in other cases, where Means are properly adapted to their End. When a Chair or a Table, or any other common object is well-proportioned, as far as I can judge, what we feel, is not a mere sensation of pleasure, from a certain arrangement of parts, but an agreeable Emotion, from the perception of the proper disposition of these parts for the End designed. In the same manner, the effect of disproportion seems to me to bear no resemblance to that immediate painful sensation which we feel from any disagreeable sound or smell, but to resemble that kind of dissatisfaction which we feel, when Means are unfitted to their End. Thus, the disproportion in the legs of a Chair or Table, does not affect us with a simple sensation of pain, but with a very observable Emotion of dissatisfaction or discontent, from the unsuitableness of this construction for the purposes which the

objects are intended to serve. Of the truth of this, every man must judge from his own experience.

The habit, indeed, which we have in a a great many familiar cases, of immediately conceiving this Fitness from the mere appearance of the Form, leads us to imagine, as it is expressed in common language, that we determine Proportion by the eye; and this quality of Fitness is so immediately expressed to us by the material Form, that we are sensible of little difference between such judgments and a mere determination of sense; yet every man must have observed, that in those cases, when either the object is not familiar to us, or the construction intricate, our judgment is by no means so speedy; and that we never discover the Proportion, until we previously discover the principle of the Machine, or the Means by which the End is produced.

2. The nature of language seems also very strongly to show the dependence of

Proportion upon Fitness, and that it produces the Emotion of Beauty, by being considered as the Sign of this quality. If a common person were asked, why the Proportion of some particular building, or machine, or instrument pleased him, he would naturally answer, because it rendered the object fit or proper for its end. If we were describing a machine or instrument, to any person who was unacquainted with the meaning of the term Proportion, and wished to inform him of the Beauty of this Proportion, we could do it perfectly well by substituting the term Fitness instead of it, and explaining to him the singular accuracy with which the several parts were adapted to the general end of the machine; and if we succeeded in this description, he would have the same Emotion from the consideration of this Fitness, that we ourselves have from the consideration of, what we call, its Proportion. It very often happens, in the same manner, that we read or hear ac-

counts of Forms which we have never seen, and of consequence, of the Proportions of which (if Proportion is a real and original quality in objects) it is impossible for us to judge; yet I think, if we are convinced that the Form is well contrived, and that its several parts are properly adjusted to their End, we immediately satisfy ourselves that it is well proportioned; and if we perfectly understand its nature or mechanism, we never hesitate to speak of its Proportion, though we never have seen it. If Proportion, on the contrary, consisted in certain determinate relations, discoverable only by a peculiar sense, all this could not possibly happen. The consideration of Fitness could no more influence our opinion of Proportion, than any other consideration; and we could as little collect the belief of Proportion in any Form from the consideration of its Fitness, as from that of its Sound or Colour.

In a great variety of cases, the terms Fit-

ness and Proportion are perfectly synonymous. There is, however, a distinction between them, which it may be necessary to explain, as it will afford a more accurate conception of the nature of Proportion, and of the foundation of its Beauty.

Every Form which is susceptible of Proportion, may be considered in either one or other of the following lights. 1*st*, In the light of its whole or general relation to the End designed, or when it is considered as a whole, without any distinction of Parts; or, 2*dly*, In the light of the relation of its several parts to this End. Thus, in the case of a machine, we may sometimes consider it in the light of its general utility for the End it is destined to serve, and sometimes in the light of the propriety of the different parts, for the attainment of this End. When we consider it in the first light, it is its Fitness which we properly consider. When we consider it in the second light, it is its Proportion we consider. Fitness may therefore

be supposed to express the general relation of propriety between Means and an End, and Proportion a peculiar or subordinate relation of this kind, *viz.* the proper relation of parts to an End. Both agree in expressing the relation of propriety between Means and their Ends. Fitness expresses the proper relation of the whole of the Means to the End. Proportion the proper relation of a part, or of parts, to their End.

In common language, accordingly, whenever we speak of this relation in a subject which has no division of parts, the terms are used synonymously. Thus we say, that a man's expences are fitted, or are proportioned to his income; that a man's ambition is fitted or proportioned to his talents; that an undertaking is fitted or proportioned to one's powers.

In subjects which are capable of division into parts, on the other hand, the terms Fitness and Proportion are not used sy-

nonymously, but according to the explanation which I have now given. Thus we say, that the Form of the Eye is admirably fitted for Vision; that the Telescope is fitted for discovering objects at a distance; that the Steam-engine is fitted for raising water: but we could not say, in any of these cases, that they were proportioned to their Ends. When we consider these subjects as composed of parts, and attend to the Form of these parts for the attainment of their Ends, we immediately speak of the Proportion of these parts. The just Proportion of such parts, is accordingly nothing more, than that peculiar Form or dimension which has been found from experience best fitted for the accomplishment of the purpose of the instrument or the machine. Proportion therefore may, I apprehend, be considered as applicable only to Forms composed of parts, and to express the relation of propriety between any part, or parts, and the End they are destined to serve.

3. It may be further observed, that Forms are just susceptible of as many proportions, as they are susceptible of parts necessary to the end for which they are intended: and that every part which has no immediate relation to this end, is unsusceptible of any accurate Proportion. In many Forms of the most common kind, there are a great number of parts which have no relation to the end or purpose of the Form, and which are intended to serve the purpose of ornament rather than of use. In such parts, accordingly, we never expect or perceive any accurate proportion, nor is there any settled and permanent opinion of Beauty in them, as there is in the great and necessary parts of the Form. In the Form of a Chair, for instance, or Table or Sofa, or Door or Window, several of the parts are merely ornamental: they have no immediate relation to the fitness of the Form, and they vary accordingly almost every year in their Forms and Sizes. All that is required of them is,

that they should not obstruct the general fitness; within that limit they are susceptible of perpetual and pleasing Variety. There are other parts, however, of the same Forms, which are necessary to the general end or purpose of their construction, as the height of the Chair for the convenience of sitting, of the Table for its peculiar purposes, &c. These parts, accordingly, have all a Proportion, which is immediately discerned, and which is never greatly violated without producing an Emotion of dissatisfaction. If, on the contrary, Proportion was something absolute and independent in Forms, it seems difficult to imagine, that it should be found only in those Forms which are susceptible of fitness, and in those parts only of such Forms as admit of this quality.

4. Our sense of Proportion in every Form keeps pace with our knowledge of the fitness of its construction. Where we have no acquaintance with the fitness of any

Form, we have no sense of its peculiar Proportions. No man, for instance, ever presumes to speak of the Proportions of a Machine, of the use or purpose of which he is ignorant. When a new Machine is shown us, we may pronounce with regard to the simplicity or the complexness of its construction, but we never venture to pronounce with regard to the propriety or impropriety of its Proportions. When our acquaintance is greater with the uses or purposes of any particular class of Forms than the generality of people, we are sensible of a greater number of pleasing Proportions in such objects, than the rest of the world; and the same parts which others look upon with indifference, we perceive as beautiful, from our knowledge of the propriety of their construction for the end designed. This every person must have observed in the language of Artists, upon the subject of the instruments of their own Arts; in the language of Anatomists, and Proficients in Na-

tural History, on many different subjects of their Science; as well as in the increase of his own sense of Proportion in different Forms, with the increase of his knowledge of the ends that such Forms are destined to serve. When any improvement, in the same manner, is made in the construction of the Forms of Art, so that different Proportions of parts are introduced, and produce their end better than the former, the new Proportions gradually become beautiful, while the former lose their Beauty. In general, it may be observed, that the Certainty of Proportion, is in all cases dependent upon the Certainty of Fitness. 1*st*, Where this Fitness is absolutely determined, as in many cases of Mechanics, the proportion is equally determined. 2*dly*, Where it is determined only by experience, the opinion of the Beauty of Proportion varies with the progress of such experience. 3*dly*, Where this Fitness cannot be subjected to experience, as in the case of natural Forms, the com-

mon Proportion is generally conceived to be the fittest, and is therefore considered as the most beautiful. It is impossible, I apprehend, to reconcile these cases of the dependence of our sense of Proportion upon our opinion of Fitness, to the belief that there are any certain and established Proportions in Forms, which are originally and independently beautiful.

These illustrations seem to me very strongly to shew the intimate connection which subsists between Proportion and Fitness; and to afford a much more simple and satisfactory solution of the delight which Proportion produces, than the opinion of its being a real and independent quality in objects.

There is, however, one case in which it may still be doubted, whether this explanation of the nature of Proportion is sufficient to account for the Phenomena: I mean in the case of ARCHITECTURE. The writers on this subject who have best understood the Art, have been unanimous in considering

the Proportions which have been discovered in it, as deriving their effect from the original constitution of our nature, and as beautiful in themselves, without relation to any Expression. They have been willing also, sometimes, to support their opinion by analogies drawn from Proportions in other subjects, and have remarked several cases in which similar Proportions are beautiful in Music and in Numbers. The futility of all reasoning from such analogies has been so often exposed, and is in itself, indeed, so very obvious, that I shall not stop to consider it.

I flatter myself, therefore, that it will not be considered as an unnecessary digression, if I endeavour to shew, that the Beauty of the Proportions in this Art, are resolvable into the same principle, and that they please us, not from any original law of our nature, but as expressive of Fitness.

The Proportions in ARCHITECTURE relate either to its EXTERNAL or its INTER-

NAL Parts. I shall offer some observations upon these subjects separately.

III.

Of the External Proportions of Architecture.

The Propriety or Fitness of any Building, intended for the habitation of Man, (as seen from without), consists chiefly in two things, 1*st*, In its Stability; and 2*dly*, In its being sufficient for the support of the Roof. Walls, in every country, at the same period of time, are nearly of an equal thickness. It is easy, therefore, for the Spectator to judge from their external appearance, whether they are, or are not sufficient for these two purposes. In plain buildings, intended merely for use, and without any view to ornament, it is these considerations which chiefly determine our opinions of Proportion. When the walls are of such a height as seems sufficient both for their own stabi-

lity, and for the support of the weight which is imposed upon them; and when the distance between them is such, as appears sufficient for supporting the weight of the roof, we consider the house as well or as properly proportioned. When any of these circumstances, on the contrary, are different; when the walls are either so high as to seem insecure, or the roof so large, as to seem too heavy for its support, or the side walls so distant, as to beget an opinion of its insecurity, we say, that the Building, in such particulars, is ill-proportioned. In such cases, what we mean by Proportion, is merely Fitness for the ends of stability and support; and as this Fitness cannot be very accurately measured, and is in itself capable of wide limits, there are accordingly no accurate Proportions of this kind, and no Architect has ever attempted to settle them. The general conclusions that we have formed from Experience, with regard to the Fitness of such Forms, are the sole guides of

our opinion with respect to these Proportions. It may be observed also, that our sentiments of the Proportions of such Buildings depend upon the nature of the Buildings, and even upon the materials of which they are composed. Gothic Buildings, of which we know the walls are considerably thicker than those of modern days, admit of greater height, and of a greater appearance of weight in the roof, than Buildings of the present age. A house built of brick or of wood, does not admit of the same height of wall, &c. with a house built of stone, because the walls are seldom so strong. A house which is united with others, admits of greater height than if it stood alone, because we conceive it to be supported by the adjoining houses. And a Building which has no roof, or nothing which it appears to support, as a Tower, or Spire, admits of a much greater height than any other species of Building. These Principles are all that seem to regulate the ex-

ternal Proportions of simple Buildings; all of them so obviously depending upon Fitness, that it is unnecessary to illustrate them farther.

It is not in such Buildings, accordingly, that any very accurate external Proportions have ever been settled. This is peculiar to what are called the Orders of Architecture, in which the whole genius of the Art has been displayed, and in which the Proportions are settled with a certainty so absolute, as to forbid almost the attempt at Innovation.

There are generally said to be five orders of Architecture, *viz.* the Tuscan, the Doric, the Ionic, the Corinthian, and the Composite. There are properly, however, only four, and some writers have further reduced them to three. What constitutes an order is its Proportions, not its ornaments. The Composite having the same proportions with the Corinthian, though very different in respect of its ornaments, is properly

therefore considered only as a corrupted Corinthian.

Every order consists of three great parts or divisions; the Base, the Column, and the Entablature; and the governing Proportions relate to this division. The whole of them compose the wall, or what answers to the wall of a common building, and supports the roof.

There is one great difference, however, to be observed between a common wall, and that assemblage of parts which constitutes an order. A common wall is intended to support a roof, and derives its proportions in a great measure from this destination. To an order, the consideration of the roof is unnecessary. It is complete without any roof, and where a roof is necessary, it is generally so contrived as not to appear. The weight which is supported, or which appears to be supported in an order, is the Entablature. The Fitness of a wall consists in its appearing adequate to the sup-

port of the roof. The Fitness of an order, or of the Proportions of an order, it should seem also, from analogy, reasonable to conclude, consists in their appearing adequate to the support of the Entablature, or of the weight which is imposed upon them.

That this is really the case, and that it is from their being expressive to us of this Fitness, that the Proportions of these different orders appear beautiful, may perhaps seem probable, from the following considerations:

1. The appearance of these Proportions themselves, seems very naturally to lead us to this conclusion. In all the orders, the Fitness of the parts to the support of the peculiar weight or appearance of weight in the Entablature, is apparent to every person, and constitutes an undoubted part of the pleasure we receive from them. In the Tuscan, where the Entablature is heavier than in the rest, the Column and Base are proportionably stronger. In the Corin-

thian, where the Entablature is lightest, the Column and Base are proportionably slighter. In the Doric and Ionic, which are between these extremes, the forms of the Column and Base are in the same manner proportioned to the reciprocal weights of their Entablatures, being neither so strong as the one, nor so slight as the other. If the Beauty of such Proportions is altogether independent of Fitness, and derived from the immediate constitution of our nature, it is difficult to account for this coincidence; and as the Beauty of Fitness in these several cases is universally allowed, it is altogether unphilosophical, to substitute other causes of the same effect, until the insufficiency of this cause is clearly pointed out.

2. The language of mankind, upon this subject, seems to confirm the same opinion. Whenever we either speak or think of the Proportions of these different orders, the circumstances of weight and support enter

both into our consideration and our Expression. The term Proportion, in its general acceptation, implies them; and if this term is not used, the same idea and the same pleasure may be communicated by terms expressive of Fitness for the support of weight. Heaviness, and slightness or insufficiency, are the terms most generally used to express a deviation on either side, from the proper relation; both of them obviously including the consideration of support, and expressing the want of Proportion. When it is said that a Base, a Column, or an Entablature is disproportioned, it is the same thing as saying, that this part is unfitted to the rest; and inadequate to the proper End of the Building. When it is said, on the other hand, that all these several parts are properly adjusted to their End, that the Base appears just sufficient for the support of the Column, and both for that of the Entablature, every person immediately concludes that the parts are per-

fectly proportioned: And, I apprehend, it is very possible to give a man a perfect conception of the Beauty of these Proportions, and to make him feel it in the strongest manner, without ever mentioning to him the name of Proportion, but merely by explaining them to him under the consideration of Fitness, and by showing him from examples, that these Forms are the most proper which can be devised for the End to which they are destined. If our perception of the Beauty of Proportion, in such cases, were altogether independent of any such considerations, I think, that these circumstances in language could not possibly take place; and that it would be as possible to explain the nature and Beauty of Proportion by terms expressive of Sound or Colour, as by terms expressive of Fitness or Propriety.

3. The natural sentiments of mankind on this subject, seem to have a different progress from what they would naturally

have, if there were any absolute Beauty in such proportions discoverable by the eye. It cannot surely be imagined, that an infant will perceive, or does perceive, the Beauty of such Proportions, in the same manner that he perceives the objects of any other external sense. It is not found either, that the generality of mankind, even when come to mature age, express any sense of the absolute Beauty of such objects. It is true, indeed, that, very early in life, we are sensible of disproportion in Building, because the ideas of bulk and support are so early and so necessarily acquired, and the Eye is so soon habituated to judge of weight from visible figure, that what is fit for the support of weight, is very soon generally ascertained. What a common person, therefore, expresses upon the view of such Proportions, is rather Satisfaction, than Delight. It is not the proportions which most affect him. It is the magnificence, the grandeur, and the costli-

ness which such Buildings usually display; and though he is much pleased with such Expressions, he is generally silent with regard to the Beauty of those Proportions with which Connoisseurs are so much enraptured. If Proportion, on the contrary, were something absolutely beautiful in such objects, the Progress of Taste would be reversed; the admiration of the infant would be given to these proportions, long before he was able to judge of their Fitness; and the satisfaction which arises from the Expression of Fitness, would be the last ingredient in his pleasure, instead of being, as it now is, the first.

4. The nature of these Proportions themselves seems very strongly to indicate their dependence upon the Expression of Fitness. The Beauty of such Forms (on the supposition of their absolute and independent Beauty) must consist either in their Beauty, considered as individual objects, or in their relation to each other. If the effect arises

from the nature of the individual Forms, then it must obviously follow, that such Forms or Proportions must be beautiful in all cases. I think, however, that there is no reason to believe this to be the case. The Base of a Column, for instance, (taken by itself, and independent of its ornaments, which in this inquiry are entirely to be excluded from consideration), is not a more beautiful Form than many others that may be given to the same quality of matter. The peculiar Form which its Proportions give it, is very far from being beautiful in every other case, as would necessarily happen, if it were beautiful in itself, and independent of every Expression. A plain stone of the same magnitude may surely be carved into very different Forms from those which constitute the bases of any of the orders, and may still be beautiful. In the same manner, the Column (considered as in the former case, merely in relation to its peculiar Form, and independent of its orna-

ments) is not more beautiful, as a Form, and perhaps not so beautiful as many other Forms of a similar kind. The Trunk of many Trees, the Mast of a Ship, the long and slender Gothic Column, and many other similar objects, are to the full as beautiful, when considered merely as Forms, without relation to any End, as any of the Columns in Architecture. If, on the contrary, these Forms were beautiful in themselves, and as individual objects, no other similar Forms could be equally beautiful, but such as had the same Proportions. The same observation will apply equally to the Form of the Entablature. It would appear, therefore, that it is not from any absolute beauty in these Forms, considered individually, that our opinion of their Beauty in Composition arises.

If it is said, on the other hand, that the Beauty of Proportion, in such cases, arises from the relation of these parts, and that there is something in the relation of such Forms and Magnitudes, in itself beautiful,

independent of any consideration of Fitness, there seem to be equal difficulties. Besides the relation of Fitness for the support of weight, the only relations which take place among these parts are, the relations of Length and Breadth, and the relation of Magnitude. If this Beauty arose from the relation of Length, it is unnecessary to show, that such a proportion of three parts in point of length, is solely and permanently beautiful. If, from the relation of Breadth, there is the same necessity of showing, that such a proportion of three parts in point of breadth is as permanently beautiful. If from both together, then the same Proportions only ought to be felt as beautiful, in all cases to which the relations of Length and Breadth can apply. If, again, this Beauty arose from the relation of Magnitude, it is necessary, in the same manner, to show, that three magnitudes or quantities of matter, have in fact no other beautiful proportions but those which take place in

such orders. But as it is very obvious, that there is no foundation for supposing any such law in our nature, and that, on the contrary, in innumerable cases of all such relations, different and contrary Proportions are beautiful, it cannot be supposed that such Proportions are absolutely beautiful from any of these relations.

The only relation, therefore, that remains, is the relation of Fitness; and if the same inquiry is carried on, I believe it will soon be found, that a certain Proportion of parts is necessarily demanded by this relation; and very probably also, that this certain Proportion is in fact that of each of these orders, according to the particular bulk or weight that is given.

If an order is considered as an assemblage of weight, and parts to support that weight, our experience immediately leads us to conceive a proper relation of these parts to their end. If the Entablature be considered as the weight, then of course a certain

Form and size in the Column is demanded for the support of it, and in the Base for the support of both. A plain stone, for instance, set upon its end, has no proportion further than for the purpose of stability. If it appears firm, it has all the proportions we desire or demand, and its form may be varied in a thousand ways, without interfering with our sense of its Proportion. Place a Column, or any other weight upon this stone; immediately another Proportion is demanded, *viz.* its Proportion to the support of this weight. The Form supported, however, has no Proportion farther than that which is necessary for its stability, or for continuing in its situation. It may be more or less beautiful in point of Form, from other considerations, but not upon account of its Proportion. Above this again place an additional body; immediately the intermediate Form demands a new Proportion, *viz.* to the weight it supports; and the first part, or the Base, demands also another

Proportion, in consideration of the additional weight which is thus imposed upon it. In this supposition, it is obvious, that the consideration of Fitness alone, leads us to expect a certain Proportion among each of these parts; the parts are beautiful or pleasing, just as they answer to this demand: and where the parts are few, and experiments easy, it seems not difficult at last, to arrive at that perfect Proportion which satisfies the Eye, as sufficient for the purposes of support and stability. If we leave, therefore, everything else out of consideration, the consideration of Fitness alone seems sufficient to account both for the origin of such Proportions in Architecture, and for the pleasure which attends the observation of them.

Although, however, the influence of the Expression of Fitness upon the Beauty of Proportion should be allowed, and the doctrine of the original Beauty of Proportion should be deserted, as inconsistent with ex-

perience, yet it may still be doubted whether this Expression is sufficient to account for the delight which most men feel from the orders of Architecture: and it may naturally be asked, why mankind have so long adhered to these Forms, without attempting to deviate from them, if they are not solely and peculiarly beautiful. The satisfaction we feel from the observation of Fitness, it may be said, is a moderate and feeble pleasure, when compared with that delight with which the models of Architecture are surveyed: and the uniform adherence of men to the established Proportions, is too strong a proof of their absolute or peculiar Beauty, to be opposed by any arguments of a distant or metaphysical kind.

With regard to the first of these objections, I acknowledge that the mere consideration of Fitness is insufficient to account for the pleasure which is generally derived from the established orders: But I apprehend, that this pleasure arises from very

different causes, than from their Proportions, and that, in fact, when these Proportions only are considered, the pleasure which is generally felt, is not greater than that which we experience, when we perceive, in any great work, the proper relation of Means to an End.

The Proportions of these orders, it is to be remembered, are distinct subjects of Beauty from the Ornaments with which they are embellished, from the Magnificence with which they are executed, from the purposes of Elegance they are intended to serve, or the scenes of Grandeur they are destined to adorn. It is in such scenes, however, and with such additions, that we are accustomed to observe them; and while we feel the effect of all these accidental Associations, we are seldom willing to examine what are the causes of the complex Emotion we feel, and readily attribute to the nature of the Architecture itself, the whole pleasure which we enjoy. But besides

these, there are other Associations we have with these Forms, that still more powerfully serve to command our admiration; for they are the GRECIAN orders; they derive their origin from those times, and were the ornament of those countries, which are most hallowed in our imaginations; and it is difficult for us to see them, even in their modern copies, without feeling them operate upon our minds, as relics of those polished nations where they first arose, and of that greater people by whom they were afterwards borrowed. While this species of Architecture is attended with so many and so pleasing Associations, it is difficult even for a man of reflection to distinguish between the different sources of his Emotion; or in the moments in which this delight is felt, to ascertain what is the exact portion of his pleasure which is to be attributed to these Proportions alone; and two different causes combine to lead us to attribute to the style of Architecture itself, the Beauty

which arises from many other Associations. In the first place, while it is under our eye, this Architecture itself is the great object of our regard, and the central object of all these Associations. It is the material sign, in fact, of all the various affecting qualities which are connected with it, and it disposes us in this, as in every other case, to attribute to the sign, the effect which is produced by the qualities signified. When we reflect, upon the other hand, in our calmer moments, upon the source of our Emotion, another motive arises to induce us to consider these Proportions as the sole or the principal cause of our pleasure; for these Proportions are the only qualities of the object which are perfectly or accurately ascertained; they have received the assent of all ages since their discovery; they are the acknowledged objects of Beauty; and having thus got possession of one undoubted principle, our natural love of system induces us to ascribe the whole of the effect to this

principle alone, and easily satisfies our minds, by saving us the trouble of a long and tedious investigation. That this cause has had its full effect in this case, will, I believe, appear very evident to those, who attend to the enthusiasm with which, in general, the writers on Architecture speak of the Beauty of Proportion, and compare it with the common sentiments of men upon the subject of this Beauty. Both these causes conspire to mislead our judgment in this point, and to induce us to attribute to one quality in such objects, that Beauty which in truth results from many united qualities.

It will be found, I believe, on the other hand, that the real Beauty of such Proportions, is in fact not greater than that which we feel in many cases where we perceive means properly adapted to their End; and that the admiration we feel from the prospect of the orders of Antiquity, is necessarily to be ascribed to other causes besides

these Proportions. The common people, undoubtedly, feel a very inferior Emotion of Beauty from such objects, to that which is felt by men of liberal education, because they have none of those Associations which modern education so early connects with them. The Man of Letters feels also a weaker Emotion than that which is felt by the Connoisseur or the Architect, because he has none of the Associations which belong to the Art, and never considers them in relation to the genius, or skill, or invention which they display. Deprive these orders, in the same manner, of their customary ornaments, and leave only the great and governing Proportions; or change only in the slightest degree their Forms, without altering these Proportions, and their Beauty will be in a great measure destroyed. Preserve, on the other hand, the whole of the orders, but diminish in a great degree their scale: and though they will still be beautiful, yet their Beauty will be in-

finitely inferior to that which they have upon their usual scale of magnificence. It is possible, in the Form of a Candlestick, or some other trifling utensil, to imitate with accuracy, any of these Orders. It is possible, in many of the common articles of furniture, to imitate some of the greatest models of this Art; but who does not know that their great Beauty in such an employment would be lost? yet still their Proportions are the same, if their Proportions are the sole cause of their beauty. Destroy, in the same manner, all the Associations of Elegance, of Magnificence, of Costliness, and still more than all, of Antiquity, which are so strongly connected with such Forms, and I conceive every man will acknowledge, that the pleasure which their Proportions would afford, would not, in fact, be greater than that which we feel in other cases, where means are properly adapted to their End.

With regard to the second objection, *viz.*

That the uniform adherence of mankind to these Proportions, is in itself a sufficient proof of their sole or absolute Beauty; I conceive that many other causes of this adherence may be assigned, and that these causes are sufficient to account for the effect, without supposing any peculiar law of our nature, by which such Proportions are originally beautiful. They who have had opportunities of remarking the extensive influence which the Associations of Antiquity have upon our minds, will be convinced that this cause alone has had a very powerful effect in producing this uniformity of opinion; and they who consider, that the real effect of Proportion is to produce only a very moderate delight, will easily perceive, that an almost insurmountable obstacle has been placed to every invention or improvement in this Art, when such inventions could oppose only a calm and rational pleasure, to that enthusiasm which is found-

ed upon so many, and so interesting Associations.

But besides these, there are other causes in the nature of the Art itself, which sufficiently account for the permanence of taste upon this subject. In every production of human Labour, the influence of Variety is limited by two circumstances, *viz.* by the costliness, and the permanence of the materials upon which that Labour is employed. Wherever the materials of any object, whether of use or of luxury, are costly; wherever the original price of such subjects is great, the influence of the love of Variety is diminished; the objects have a great intrinsic value, independent of their particular Form or Fashion; and as the destruction of the Form is in most cases the destruction of the subject itself, the same Form is adhered to with little Variation. In dress, for instance, in which the Variation of Fashion is more observable than in most other subjects, it is those parts

of Dress which are least costly, of which the Forms are most frequently changed: in proportion as the original value increases, the disposition to Variety diminishes; and in some objects, which are extremely costly, as in the case of jewels, there is no change of Fashion whatever, except in circumstances different from the value of the objects themselves, as in their setting or disposition. Of all the fine Arts, however, Architecture is by far the most costly. The wealth of individuals is frequently dissipated by it; and even the revenue of nations, is equal only to very slow, and very infrequent productions of this kind. The value, therefore, of such objects, is in a great measure independent of their Forms; the invention of men is little excited to give an additional value to subjects, which in themselves are so valuable; and the Art itself, after it has arrived at a certain necessary degree of perfection, remains in a great measure stationary, both from the in-

frequency of cases in which invention can be employed, and from the little demand there is for the exercise of that invention. The nature of the Grecian orders very plainly indicates, that they were originally executed in wood, and that they were settled before the Greeks had begun to make use of stone in their buildings. From the period that stone was employed, and that of course public buildings became more costly, little farther progress seems to have been made in the Art. The costliness of the subject, in this as in every other case, gave a kind of permanent value to the Form by which it was distinguished.

If, besides the costliness of the subject, it is also permanent and durable, this character is still farther increased. Those productions, of which the materials are perishable, and must often be renewed, are from their nature subjected to the influence of Variety. Chairs and Tables, for instance, and the other common articles of Furni-

ture, cannot well last above a few years, and very often not so long. In such articles, accordingly, there is room for the invention of the Artist to display itself, and as the subject itself is of no very great value, and may derive a considerable one from its Form, a strong motive is given to the exercise of this invention. But Buildings may last, and are intended to last for centuries. The life of Man is very inadequate to the duration of such productions: and the present period of the world, though old with respect to those Arts which are employed upon perishable subjects, is yet young in relation to an Art, which is employed upon so durable materials as those of Architecture. Instead of a few years, therefore, centuries must probably pass before such productions demand to be renewed, and long before that period is elapsed, the sacredness of Antiquity is acquired by the subject itself, and a new motive given for the preservation of similar Forms. In

every country, accordingly, the same effect has taken place: and the same causes which have thus served to produce among us, for so many years, an uniformity of Taste with regard to the style of Grecian Architecture, have produced also, among the nations of the East, for a much longer course of time, a similar uniformity of Taste with regard to their ornamental style of Architecture; and have perpetuated among them the same Forms, which were in use among their forefathers, before the Grecian orders were invented.

It is impossible for me to pursue these speculations, with regard to the foundation of Beauty in Architecture, to the extent to which they would lead. The hints which I have now offered, may perhaps satisfy the Reader, that the Beauty of the External Proportions of Architecture, is to be ascribed to their Expression of Fitness; that this Beauty is in fact not greater than what is often felt from similar Expression in other

subjects: and that both the admiration of mankind, and the uniformity of their Taste with regard to the style of Grecian Architecture, is to be ascribed to other causes, than any absolute or independent Beauty in the Proportions by which it is distinguished.

IV.

Of the Internal Proportions of Architecture.

By the Internal Proportions of Architecture, I mean that disposition of the three dimensions of Length, Breadth, and Height, which is necessary to render a room or apartment beautiful or pleasing in its Form. Every man is able at first sight to say, whether a room is well or ill-proportioned; although perhaps it is difficult to say, what is the principle from which this propriety is determined. Many of the writers upon Architecture consider certain Proportions

of this kind as beautiful from the original constitution of our nature, and without relation to any Expression. I apprehend, on the contrary, that the Beauty of Proportion, in this, as in the former case, arises from its Expression of Fitness.

I have already observed, that a plain wall is susceptible of no other Proportion, than that Proportion of height which is necessary for the Expression of Strength or Stability. If it appears firm and sufficient, it has all the Proportion we desire. Suppose any space inclosed by four walls, the same proportion remains: we require that the height should be such as to indicate stability, and if this is answered, we require no more. The Form of the inclosure may be more or less beautiful, from other causes; but we never say that it is beautiful on account of its Proportion. Add a roof to this inclosure; and immediately a variety of other Proportions are demanded, from the consideration of the weight which is

now to be supported. If the walls are very high, they have the appearance of insufficiency for this support; if very low, they indicate an unnecessary and unusual weight in the roof. A certain Proportion, therefore, in point of height, is demanded. If the length of the inclosure is great, the roof appears also to be insufficiently supported, and from the laws of perspective, its weight seems to increase as it retires from the Eye. A certain proportion, therefore, in point of Length, is demanded. If, in the last case, the breadth of the inclosure is very great, a still stronger conviction of insufficiency arises from the distance of the supporting walls. A certain proportion, therefore, in point of Breadth is demanded, for the same end. Wherever a Form of this kind is produced; wherever walls are united for the support of a roof, these Proportions are necessarily required; and so far are they from being remote from common observation, that there is no man who is not immediately sensible

of any great violation of them. Every apartment, however, is an inclosure of this kind. It seems natural, therefore, to imagine, that the Proportions of an apartment will be pleasing, when they appear sufficient for the full and easy support of the roof; and that they are beautiful from being expressive of this Fitness. This proposition may perhaps be more obvious from the following considerations:

1. It may be observed, that the real Beauty of Proportion in this case, is not greater than that which attends the Expression of Fitness in other cases; and that this Expression is perfectly sufficient to account for the whole of the delight which men in general feel from these objects. Artists, indeed, very frequently talk with enthusiasm of the Beauty of such Proportions, and are willing to ascribe to the Proportions themselves, that Emotion which they in reality receive from the associations which their art and their education have connected

with them; but whatever may be the language of Artists, the uniform language of the bulk of mankind is very different. What they feel from the appearance of a well-proportioned room, is satisfaction, rather than positive delight: they are hurt with the want of proportion; but they are not greatly enraptured with its presence. What they are delighted with, in apartments where this Beauty has been studied, is their Decoration and their Furniture; the Convenience, or Elegance, or Magnificence which they exhibit. Every one knows, accordingly, that the best-proportioned room, before it is finished, and while nothing but its Proportions are discernible, produces only a very calm and moderate pleasure, in no respect greater than that which we feel from a well-constructed machine, or convenient piece of furniture. Remove even the furniture from the most finished apartment, and the delight which we receive from it is immediately diminished; yet the

Proportions are altogether independent of the Furniture, and are much more discernible when it is removed. No person, in the same manner, remarks the Proportions of the miserable room of a cottage, or any other mean dwelling: yet the most regular Proportions may, and sometimes are to be found in a cottage. If the apartments in such a building were purposely constructed according to the most rigorous law of Proportion, I apprehend, that they would produce no Emotion greater than that of simple Satisfaction; yet if these Proportions were themselves originally beautiful, they ought in this case to produce the same delight as in the Senate-house or the Palace. If therefore (as seems to be evident) certain Proportions are demanded in a room, as expressive of Fitness; and if the Emotion that is produced by the established and regular Proportions, is no greater than that which we receive in other cases, from the Expression of this quality, it seems reasonable to

conclude, that the Proportions are in fact beautiful, from the Expression of this Fitness.

2. The general language of mankind seems to confirm the same opinion. Whoever has had occasion to attend to the common language of men on this subject, must have observed, that the usual terms by which they express their sense of Proportion, or of the want of Proportion in a room, are those of Lightness and Heaviness; terms which obviously suppose the belief of weight and of support, and which could not have been used, if the Beauty of Form, in this case, did not depend upon the Fitness or Propriety of this relation. The terms Proportion and Disproportion are in truth altogether unintelligible to the common people; and to describe to them any apartment, in such terms, leaves them as ignorant as ever of its Beauty; but there is hardly any man who does not readily apprehend, that an apartment is of a pleasing

Form, when he is told that the walls are neither too high, nor too low, nor too wide for the support of the roof, or who will not as readily apprehend the contrary, when he is told, that, in either of these respects, an appearance of insecurity is produced. A room which is low, or wide in the roof, is in general said to be heavy. A room, on the contrary, which is high in the roof, and in which this weight seems to be properly and easily sustained, is said to be light. If we were under the necessity of interpreting to a common person the language of Artists, or of explaining to him in what the Beauty of Form in this respect consists, I apprehend, we should naturally do it, by representing it to him as light, or as so contrived that the support was perfectly adapted to the weight: and, on the other hand, if we were to explain to him in what respect any room was deficient, we should as naturally do it, by pointing out to him where the construction was deficient in Fitness, and

had the appearance of heaviness, or insufficient support. In this manner also, without ever hearing of the terms of Proportion or Disproportion, or considering the subject in any other light than that of Fitness, he might acquire a perfect conception of this Beauty; and be led, in fact, to the same conclusions with regard to the proper composition of these dimensions, that are already established under the title of Proportions. If these Proportions, however, were originally and independently beautiful, no explanation of them from another sense could possibly be intelligible; and the substitution of the term Fitness would be as unmeaning as that of Sound or Colour. I am far from contending, that the generality of men are very accurate in their notions of the propriety of the relation of weight and support, or very proper judges of the perfection of Proportion in this respect. But I apprehend, that the terms of Heaviness and Lightness which they employ, and uni-

versally understand, are a sufficient evidence of the principle upon which their judgments are formed, and that they show, that it is from the Expression of Fitness for the support of weight that their admiration is determined.

The same observation which was made with regard to the Progress of Taste, in the external Proportions of this Art, is applicable also to its internal Proportions. If they were originally and independently beautiful, the earlier period of life would be most remarkable for the discovery of them: and it would be only in later life, and in proportion to our Experience, that we could discover the additional Beauty which they derive from their Fitness. Every one knows, however, that the real progress is different; that during the years of infancy and childhood no sensibility whatever is shewn to this Beauty; that it is only as our Experience enables us to judge of the relation between weight and support, that we begin to

be sensible of it; that they whose occupations have prevented them from forming any very accurate judgment of this kind, are proportionably deficient in the accuracy of their Taste; and that, in general, the bulk of mankind have no farther conception of this species of Beauty, than what arises from the consideration of Fitness for the support of weight.

3. If there were any absolute and independent Beauty in such Proportions, it seems reasonable to imagine, that every violation of them would be equally painful; and that the deviation from them in each of these dimensions, would be attended with a similar Emotion of Discontent. All these Proportions relate either to the Height, the Length, or the Breadth, of an apartment. Every man, however, must have observed, that it is with very different feelings he regards the want of Proportion in these three respects. Too great a Height in a room is not nearly so painful as too little Height;

and too great a length produces a trifling Emotion of Discontent, compared with that which we feel from too great a Breadth. Whether a room is a few feet too high, or too long, few people observe; but every one observes a much less disproportion, either in the diminution of its Height, or in the extent of its Breadth. The most general faults, accordingly, which common people find with apartments, is either in their being too low, or too broad. The Proportions of Height and Length they seldom attend to, if they are not greatly violated. These facts, though not easily reconcileable with the doctrine of the absolute Beauty of these Proportions, agree very minutely with the account which I have given of the origin of this Beauty. If this Beauty arises from the Expression of Fitness, the Proportions, of which the violation should affect us the most, ought to be those which are most necessary for the production of this Fitness. These, however, very obviously,

are either too little Height, or too great Breadth: the first immediately indicating an unusual weight in the roof, and the other expressing the greatest possible insufficiency for the support of this weight. The most unpleasing Form of an apartment, accordingly, that it is possible to contrive, is that of being at the same time very broad, and very low in the roof. Too great Height, and too great length, on the other hand, have not so disagreeable Expressions. By the first, at least, Fitness is, in no material degree, violated, and what we feel from it is chiefly a slight Emotion of Discontent, from its being unsuited to the general character or destination of rooms. Our indifference to the second disproportion, or to too great length, arises from a different cause, *viz.* from our knowledge that the Beams which support the roof are laid latitudinally, and our consequent belief that the difference of length makes no difference with regard to the sufficiency of sup-

port. Change, accordingly, in any apartment this disposition of the beams; let the Spectator perceive, that they are placed according to the length, and not as usual according to the breadth of the room; and whatever may be its other dimensions, or however great length these dimensions may require, no greater length will be permitted without pain, than that which is expressive of perfect sufficiency in the beams for the support of the roof. As there is thus no uniform Emotion which attends the perception of these Proportions, as would necessarily be the case, if their Beauty were perceived by any peculiar sense; and as the Emotion which we in fact receive from them is different, according to their different Expressions of Fitness, it seems reasonable to ascribe their Beauty to this Expression, and not to any original Beauty in the Proportions themselves.

4. If there were any original Beauty in such Proportions, they would necessarily be

as certain as the objects of any other sense; and there would be one precise proportion of the three dimensions of Length, Breadth, and Height, solely and permanently beautiful. Every one knows, however, that this is not the case; no Artist has ever presumed to fix on such Proportions; and so far is there from being any permanent Beauty in any one relation of these dimensions, that the same Proportions which are beautiful in one apartment, are not beautiful in others. From whatever causes these variations in the Beauty of Proportion arise, they conclude immediately against the doctrine of their original Beauty. There seem, however, to be three principal causes of this difference in our opinion of the Beauty of Proportion, which I must confine myself barely to mention, without attempting the full illustration of them.

1. The first is the consideration of the weight supported. As all roofs are supported by the side-walls, and composed in

general of the uniform material of wood, there is a certain, though not a very precise limit which we impose to their breadth, from our knowledge that, if they pass this limit, they are insufficient and insecure. To the length and to the height, on the other hand, we do not impose any such rigorous limits, because neither of these Proportions interfere materially with our opinion of security. Within this limit of breadth, there may be several Proportions to the length and height, which shall be universally pleasing. But beyond this limit, these Proportions cease to be pleasing, and become painful in the same degree that they pass this boundary of apparent security. Thus, a room of twelve feet square, may constitute a pleasing Form; but a room of sixty feet square would be positively disagreeable. A room twenty-four feet in length, by eighteen in breadth, may be sufficiently pleasing; but a room sixty feet in length, by fifty in breadth, would constitute

a very unpleasing Form. Many other instances might easily be produced, to show, that the Beauty of every apartment depends on the appearance of proper support to the roof; and that, on this account, the same proportion of breadth that is beautiful in one case, becomes positively painful in others.

2. A second cause of this difference in our opinion of the Beauty of Proportion, arises from the Character of the apartment. Every one must have observed, that the different Forms of rooms, their difference of magnitude, and various other causes, give them distinct characters, as those of Gaiety, Simplicity, Solemnity, Grandeur, Magnificence, &c. No room is ever beautiful, which has not some such pleasing character; the terms by which we express this Beauty are significant of these characters; and however regular the Proportions of an apartment may be, if they do not correspond to the general Expression, we con-

sider the Form as defective or imperfect. Thus, the same Proportion of height which is beautiful in a room of Gaiety, or Cheerfulness, would be felt as a defect in an apartment of which the character was Severity or Melancholy. The same Proportion of length which is pleasing in an elegant or convenient room, would be a defect in an apartment of Magnificence or Splendour. The great Proportion of breadth which suits a Temple or a Senate-house, as according with the severe and solemn character of the apartment, would be positively unpleasing in any room which was expressive of Cheerfulness or Lightness. In proportion also as apartments differ in size, different Proportions become necessary in this respect, to accord with the characters which the difference of Magnitude produces. The same Proportion of height which is pleasing in a cheerful room, would be too little for the hall of a great castle, where vastness is necessary to agree with the sublimity of its

character; and the same relation of Breadth and Height which is so wonderfully affecting in the Gothic Cathedral, although at variance with all the classic rules of Proportion, would be both absurd and painful, in the Forms of any common apartment. In general, I believe it will be found, that the great and positive Beauty of apartments arises from their Character; that where no character is discovered, the generality of men express little admiration even at the most regular Proportions; that every difference of character requires a correspondent difference in the composition of the dimensions; and that this demand is satisfied, or a beautiful Form produced, only, when the composition of the different Proportions is such as to produce one pure and unmingled Expression.

3. The third cause of the difference of our opinion of the Beauty of Proportion arises from the destination of the apartment. All apartments are intended for some use or

purpose of human life. We demand therefore, that the Form of them should be accommodated to these Ends; and wherever the Form is at variance with the End, however regular, or generally beautiful its Proportions may be, we are conscious of an Emotion of dissatisfaction and discontent. The Most obvious illustration of the dependence of the Beauty of Proportion, on this species of utility, may be taken from the common system that natural Taste has dictated in the Proportion of different apartments in great houses. The hall, the saloon, the antichamber, the drawing-room, the dining-room, the bed-chamber, the dressing-room, the library, the chapel, &c. have all different Forms and different Proportions. Change these Proportions; give to the dining-room the Proportions of the saloon, to the dressing-room these of the library, to the chapel, the Proportions of the antichamber, or to the drawing-room those of the hall, &c. and every one will consider

them as unpleasing and defective Forms, because they are unfitted to the Ends they are destined to serve.

The observations which I have now offered on the Beauty of the Internal Proportions of Architecture, seem to afford sufficient evidence for concluding in general,

That the Beauty of these Proportions is not original and independent, but that it arises in all cases from the Expression of some species of FITNESS.

The Fitness, however, which such Proportions may express, is of different kinds; and the Reader who will pursue the slight hints that I have suggested upon the subject, may perhaps agree with me in the following conclusions:

1. That one Beauty of these Proportions arises from their Expression of Fitness for the support of the weight imposed.

2. That a second source of their Beauty consists in their Expression of Fitness

for the preservation of the character of the apartment.

3. That a third source of their Beauty consists in their Expression of Fitness, in the general Form, for its peculiar purpose or End.

The two first Expressions constitute the PERMANENT Beauty, and the third the ACCIDENTAL Beauty of an apartment.

In every beautiful apartment the two first Expressions must be united. An apartment, of which the Proportions express the most perfect Fitness for the support of the roof, but which is itself expressive of no character, is beheld rather with satisfaction than delight, and is never remarked as beautiful. The Beauty of character, on the other hand, is neglected, if the Proportions of the apartment are such as to indicate insufficiency or insecurity. The first constitutes what may be called the Negative, and the second the Positive

Beauty of an apartment; and every apartment (considered only in relation to its Proportions, and without any respect to its End) will be beautiful in the same degree in which these Expressions are united, or in which the same Proportions that produce the appearance of perfect sufficiency, agree also in maintaining the general character of the apartment.

When, however, the apartment is considered in relation to its End, the Beauty of its Proportions is determined in a great measure by their Expression of Fitness for this End. To this, as to every other species of apartment, the Expression of security is necessary, and such an apartment will accordingly be beautiful, when these Expressions coincide.

The most perfect Beauty that the Proportions of an apartment can exhibit, will be when all these Expressions unite; or when the same relations of dimension which are productive of the Expression of

sufficiency, agree also in the preservation of Character, and in the indication of Use.

PART III.

Of the Influence of Utility upon the Beauty of Forms.

The third source of the RELATIVE Beauty of Forms, is UTILITY. That the Expression of this quality is sufficient to give Beauty to Forms, and that Forms of the most different and opposite kinds become beautiful from this Expression, are facts which have often been observed, and which are within the reach of every person's observation. I shall not therefore presume to add any illustrations on a subject, which has already been so beautifully illustrated by Mr Smith, in the most eloquent work * on the subject of MORALS, that Modern Europe has produced.

* Theory of Moral Sentiments.

SECTION III.

Of the Accidental Beauty of Forms.

Beside the Expressions that have now been enumerated, and which constitute the two great and permanent sources of the Beauty of Forms, there are others of a casual or accidental kind, which have a very observable effect in producing the same Emotion in our minds, and which constitute what may be called the Accidental Beauty of Forms. Such associations, instead of being common to all mankind, are peculiar to the individual. They take their rise from education, from peculiar habits of thought, from situation, from profession; and the Beauty they produce is felt only by those whom similar causes have led to the formation of similar associations. There are few men who have not associations of

this kind, with particular Forms, from their being familiar to them from their infancy, and thus connected with the gay and pleasing imagery of that period of life; from their connection with scenes to which they look back with pleasure; or people whose memories they love; and such Forms, from this accidental connection, are never seen, without being in some measure the Signs of all those affecting and endearing recollections. When such associations are of a more general kind, and are common to many individuals, they sometimes acquire a superiority over the more permanent principles of Beauty, and determine even for a time the Taste of nations. The admiration which is paid to the Forms of Architecture, of Furniture, of Ornament, which we derive from Antiquity, though undoubtedly very justly due to these Forms themselves, originates, in the greater part of mankind, from the associations which they connect with these Forms. These associations, however,

are merely accidental; and were these Forms much inferior in point of Beauty, the admiration which Modern Europe bestows on them, would not be less enthusiastic than it is now. There are even cases where, in a few years, the Taste of a nation, in such respects, undergoes an absolute change, from associations of a different kind becoming general or fashionable; and where the beautiful Form is always found to correspond to the prevailing association. They who are learned in the History of Dress, will recollect many instances of this kind. In every other species of ornament it is also observable. A single instance will be sufficient.

In the succession of Fashions which have taken place in the article of ornamental Furniture, within these few years, every one must have observed how much their Beauty has been determined by accidental associations of this kind, and how little the real and permanent Beauty of such Forms has

been regarded. Some years ago, every article of this kind was made in what was called the CHINESE Taste, and however fantastic and uncouth the Forms in reality were, they were yet universally admired, because they brought to mind those images of Eastern magnificence and splendour, of which we have heard so much, and which we are always willing to believe, because they are distant. To this succeeded the GOTHIC Taste. Every thing was now made in imitation, not indeed of Gothic furniture, but in imitation of the Forms and ornaments of Gothic Halls and Cathedrals. This slight association, however, was sufficient to give Beauty to such Forms, because it led to ideas of Gothic manners and adventure, which had become fashionable in the world from many beautiful Compositions both in Prose and Verse. The Taste which now reigns is that of the ANTIQUE. Everything we now use, is made in imitation of those models which have been lately

discovered in Italy; and they serve in the same manner to occupy our imagination, by leading to those recollections of Grecian or Roman Taste, which have so much the possession of our minds, from the studies and amusements of our youth.

I shall only further observe upon this subject, that all such instances of the effect of accidental Expression, in bestowing a temporary Beauty upon Forms, conclude immediately against the doctrine of their absolute or independent Beauty; and that they afford a very strong presumption, if not a direct proof, that their permanent Beauty arises also from the Expressions they permanently convey to us.

From the illustrations that I have offered in this long chapter on the Beauty of Forms, we seem to have sufficient reason for concluding in general, that no Forms, or species of Forms, are in themselves originally beautiful; but that their Beauty in

all cases arises from their being expressive to us of some pleasing or affecting Qualities.

If the views also that I have presented on the subject are just, we may perhaps still farther conclude, that the principal sources of the Beauty of Forms are, 1*st*, The Expressions we connect with peculiar Forms, either from the Form itself, or the nature of the subject thus Formed. 2*dly*, The qualities of Design, and Fitness, and Utility, which they indicate: And, 3*dly*, The accidental Associations which we happen to connect with them. The consideration of these different Expressions may afford perhaps some general rules, that may not be without their use, to those Arts that are employed in the production of Beauty.

All Forms are either ORNAMENTAL or USEFUL.

I. The Beauty of merely ORNAMENTAL Forms appears to arise from three sources.

1. From the Expression of the Form itself,

2. From the Expression of Design.

3. From Accidental Expression.

The real and positive Beauty, therefore, of every Ornamental Form, will be in proportion to the nature and the permanence of the Expression by which it is distinguished. The strongest and most permanent Emotion, however, we can receive from such Expressions, is that which arises from the nature of the Form itself. The Emotion we receive from the Expression of Design, as I have already shown, is neither so strong nor so permanent: and that which accidental Associations produce, perishes often with the year which gave it birth. The Beauty of accidental Expression, is as variable as the caprice or fancy of mankind. The Beauty of the Expression of Design, varies with every period of Art. The Beauty which arises from the Expression of Form itself, is alone permanent, as founded upon the uniform constitution of the human mind. Considering therefore the Beauty of

Forms as constituted by the degree and the permanence of their Expression, the following conclusions seem immediately to suggest themselves:

1. That the greatest Beauty which Ornamental Forms can receive, will be that which arises from the Expression of the Form itself.

2. That the next will be that which arises from the Expression of Design or Skill. And,

3. That the least will be that which arises from accidental or temporary Expression.

In all those Arts, therefore, that respect the Beauty of Form, it ought to be the unceasing study of the Artist, to disengage his mind from the accidental Associations of his age, as well as the common prejudices of his Art; to labour to distinguish his productions by that pure and permanent expression, which may be felt in every age; and to disdain to borrow a transitory fame,

by yielding to the temporary caprices of his time, or by exhibiting only the display of his own dexterity or skill. Or, if the accidental Taste of mankind must be gratified, it is still to be remembered, that it is only in those Arts, which are employed upon perishable subjects, that it can be gratified with safety; that in those greater productions of Art, which are destined to last for centuries, the fame of the Artist must altogether depend upon the permanence of the Expression, which he can communicate to his work; and that the only Expression which is thus permanent, and which can awaken the admiration of every succeeding age, is that which arises from the Nature of Form itself, and which is founded upon the uniform constitution of Man and of Nature.

II. The Beauty of USEFUL Forms, arises either from the Expression of Fitness, or of Utility.

With regard to this species of Beauty, it

is necessary at present only to observe, 1*st*, That it is in itself productive of a much weaker Emotion, than that which arises from the different sources of ornamental Beauty; but 2*d*, that this Emotion is of a more constant and permanent kind, and much more uniformly fitted to excite the admiration of mankind.

To unite these different kinds of Beauty; to dignify Ornamental Forms also by Use, and to raise merely Useful Forms into Beauty, is the great object of ambition among every class of Artists. Wherever both these objects can be attained, the greatest possible Beauty that Form can receive, will be produced; but as this can very seldom be the case, the following rules seem immediately to present themselves, for the direction of the Artist.

1. That where the Utility of Forms is equal, that will be the most beautiful to which the most pleasing Expression of Form is given.

2. That when those Expressions are at variance, when the Utility of the Form cannot be produced, without sacrificing its natural Beauty, or when this beauty of Form cannot be preserved without sacrificing its utility, that Form will be most universally and most permanently beautiful, in which the Expression of Utility is most fully preserved.

To human Art indeed, this union will always be difficult, and often impossible; and the Artist, whatever may be his genius, must be content to suffer that sublime distress, which a great mind alone can feel, "to dedicate his life to the attainment of an "ideal Beauty, and to die at last without "attaining it*." Yet if it is painful to us to feel the limits that are thus imposed to the invention of Man, it is still more pleasing to us, from the narrow schools of human Art, to turn our regard to the great school of

* Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Nature, and to observe the stupendous wisdom with which these Expressions are united in almost every Form. " And here, I think," says Mr Hogarth, " will be the proper place " to speak of a most curious difference be- " tween the living machines of Nature in " respect of Fitness, and such poor ones in " comparison with them, as men are only " capable of making. A Clock, by the " Government's order, has been made by " Mr Harrison for the keeping of true time " at sea; which is perhaps one of the most " exquisite movements ever made. Happy " the ingenious Contriver! although the " Form of the whole, or of every part of " this curious machine should be ever so " confused, or displeasingly shaped to the " eye, and although even its movements " should be disagreeable to look at, provid- " ed it answers the end proposed: an or- " namental composition was no part of his " scheme, otherwise than as a polish might " be necessary; if ornaments are required

" to be added to mend its shape, care must " be taken that they are no obstruction to " the movement itself, and the more as " they would be superfluous as to the main " design. But, in Nature's machines, how " wonderfully do we see Beauty and Use " go hand in hand! Had a Machine for " this purpose been Nature's work, the " whole and every individual part might " have had exquisite Beauty of Form, " without danger of destroying the ex- " quisiteness of its motion, even as if or- " nament had been the sole aim; its move- " ments too might have been graceful with- " out one superfluous tittle added for either " of these lovely purposes. Now this is that " curious difference between the Fitness of " Nature's Machines, and those made by " mortal hands."

The application of this fine observation, to innumerable instances both of inanimate and animated Forms, it is in the power of every one to make; and I am much

more willing to leave the impression which it must make upon every mind entire, than to weaken it by any illustrations of my own.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Beauty and Sublimity of Motion.

Motion is in many cases productive of the Emotions of Sublimity and Beauty. With this quality, accordingly, we have many interesting and affecting Associations. These Associations arise either from the nature of Motion itself, or from the nature of the bodies moved. The following illustrations may perhaps show, that the Beauty and Sublimity of Motion arises from these Associations, and that we have no reason to believe, that this quality of Matter is in itself either beautiful or sublime.

I.

All Motion is produced either by visible or invisible power: by some cause which

we perceive, or by some which is not the object of sense.

With all Motions of the latter kind, we connect the idea of voluntary Power; and such Motions are in fact expressive to us of the exertion of Power... Whether this Association is the consequence of Experience, or whether it is the effect of an original Principle, it is not at present material to inquire. The instance of children, and even of animals, who uniformly infer life, where they perceive Motion without any material cause, are sufficient evidences of the fact.

That the Sublimity and Beauty of Motion arises from their Expression of Power, seems to be evident from the two following considerations:

1. There is no instance where Motion, which is the apparent effect of Force, is beautiful or sublime. It is impossible to conceive the Motion of a body that is drag-

ged or visibly impelled by another body, as either sublime or beautiful.

2. All beautiful or sublime Motion is expressed in language by verbs in the active voice. We say even in common language, that a torrent pours,—a stream glides,—a rivulet winds,—that lightning darts,—that light streams.—Change these Expressions, by means of any verbs in the passive voice, and the whole Beauty of their Motion is destroyed. In poetical Composition, the same circumstance is uniformly observable. If Motion were in itself beautiful or sublime, or if any particular kinds of Motion were so, these circumstances could not happen; and such Motions would still be beautiful or sublime, whether they were expressive of Power or not.

The character of Power varies according to its degree, and produces, according to this difference, different Emotions in our mind. Great Power produces an Emotion of Awe and Admiration. Gentle or mode-

rate, or diminutive Power, produces an Emotion of Tenderness, of Interest, of Affection. To every species of Power that is pleasing, the idea of superiority to obstacle is necessary. All Power, whether great or small, which is inferior to obstacle, induces the idea of Imperfection, and is considered with a kind of dissatisfaction.

These considerations will probably explain a great part of the absolute Sublimity and Beauty of Motion.

Motion differs according to its DEGREE, and according to its DIRECTION.

I. Of the DEGREE of MOTION. All Motion, when rapid, is, I apprehend, accompanied with the idea of great Power. When slow, on the other hand, with the idea of gentle or diminutive Power. For the truth of this remark, I must appeal to the Reader's own observation. Rapid Motion, accordingly, is sublime, slow Motion beautiful.

II. Of the DIRECTION of MOTION. Motion is either in a straight Line, in an angular Line, or in a serpentine or curvilinear Line.

1. Motion in a straight Line chiefly derives its Expression from its Degree. When rapid, it is simply sublime: When slow, it is simply beautiful.

2. Motion in an angular Line is expressive of Obstruction, or of imperfect Power. When considered therefore in itself, and without relation to the body moving, it is simply unpleasing.

3. Motion in Curves is expressive of Ease, of Freedom, of Playfulness, and is consequently beautiful.

The truth of this account of our Associations with Motion, I refer to the examination of the Reader. The real Beauty and Sublimity of the different appearances of Motion, seem to me to correspond very accurately with the Expressions which the

different combinations of the Degree, and the Direction of Motion, convey to us.

1. Rapid Motion, in a straight line, is simply expressive of great Power. It is accordingly, in general, Sublime. Rapid Motion in angular Lines, is expressive of great, but imperfect Power, of a power which every obstacle is sufficient to overcome. I believe that Motion of this kind is accordingly very seldom sublime. Rapid Motion in curve Lines is expressive of great Power, united with Ease, Freedom, or Playfulness. Motion of this kind, accordingly, though more Sublime than the preceding, is less Sublime than the first species of Motion. The course of a Torrent, when in a straight Line, is more sublime than when it winds into Curves, and much more sublime than when it is broken into Angles. The impetuous shooting of the Eagle would lose much of its sublimity, if it were to deviate from the straight Line,

and would be simply painful, if it were to degenerate into an angular Line.

2. Slow Motion in a straight Line, is simply expressive of gentle and delicate Power. It is accordingly beautiful. Slow Motion in angular Lines, is expressive of gentle Power, and of imperfection or obstruction. These expressions, however, do not well accord, and mutually destroy each other. Motion of this kind, is, accordingly, very seldom beautiful. Slow Motion in Curves is expressive of gentle Power, united with Ease, Freedom, and Playfulness. It is accordingly peculiarly beautiful. The soft gliding of a stream, the light traces of a summer Breeze upon a field of corn, are beautiful when in a straight Line; they are much more beautiful when they describe serpentine or winding Lines: but they are scarcely beautiful, when their direction is in sharp angles, and sudden deviations.

The most sublime Motion, is that of rapid Motion in a straight Line. The most

beautiful, is that of slow Motion in a line of Curves. I humbly apprehend, that these conclusions are not very distant from common experience upon this subject.

II.

Besides these, however, which may be called the permanent Expressions of Motion, there are others which arise from the nature of the bodies moved, and which have a very obvious effect in giving Beauty or Sublimity to the peculiar Motions by which they are distinguished. Instances of this kind are so familiar, that it will be necessary only to point out a few.

Slow Motion is, in general, simply beautiful. Where, however, the body is of great magnitude, slow Motion is sublime. The slow Motion of a first-rate Man-of-War; the slow Ascent of a great Balloon; the slow march of an embattled Army, are all sublime Motions, and no person can observe

> The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave,
> High tow'ring sail along the horizon blue,

without an Emotion of this kind.

Rapid Motion is in general Sublime, yet where the bodies excite only pleasing or moderate affections, Motion of this kind becomes beautiful. The rapid shooting of the Aurora Borealis, the quick ascent of Fire-works, a sudden stream of light from a small luminous object in the dark, are familiar instances of this kind. The Motion of the humming-Bird is more rapid perhaps than that of the Eagle, yet the Motion of the humming-Bird is only beautiful.

Motion in angular Lines is, in general, productive of an Emotion of discontent, rather than of any Emotion either of Sublimity or Beauty. Yet the Motion of Lightning, which is commonly of this kind, is strikingly Sublime. The same appearance in electrical Experiments is beautiful.

Slow Motion in waving Lines, is in gene-

ral the most beautiful of all. But the Motion of Snakes or of Serpents, is of all others the most disagreeable and painful.

In these instances, and many others that might be mentioned, it is obvious, that the Sublimity or Beauty of the Motion arises from the Expression or Character of the Bodies moved, and that in such cases, the Expression of the Body predominates over the general Expression which we associate with the Motion by which it is distinguished.

From the facts I have mentioned, we may conclude:

1*st*, That the Beauty and Sublimity of Motion, arises from the Associations we connect either with the Motion itself, or with the Bodies moved. And,

2*dly*, That this Sublimity or Beauty, in any particular case, will be most perfect, when the Expression of the Motion, and that of the Body moved, coincide.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Beauty of the Human Countenance and Form.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE preceding inquiries relate only to the Beauty and Sublimity of inanimate Matter. I proceed to consider the Origin of the Beauty or Sublimity which we perceive in the Countenance and Form of MAN; the Being, amid all the innumerable classes of Material Existence, who, in this respect, enjoys the most undoubted pre-eminence; and to whom the liberality of Nature has been most conspicuous, in accommodating

the Majesty and Beauty of his external frame to the supreme rank which she has assigned him among her Works.

The full investigation of the Principles of Human Beauty; and the application of them to the Arts of Painting and of Statuary, would furnish one of the most pleasing Speculations which the Science of Taste can afford. I am necessarily restrained to a more humble inquiry; and must confine myself to the examination of a single question: Whether the Beauty of the Human Species is to be ascribed to any law of our Nature, by which certain appearances in the Countenance and Form are originally, and independently, Beautiful or Sublime? or whether, as in the case of inanimate matter, it is to be ascribed to the various pleasing or interesting Expressions we connect with such appearances?

In entering upon this investigation, it is impossible not to observe, that if the Human Frame is, of all Material Objects, that

in which the greatest degree of Beauty is found, it is also the object with which we have the most numerous, and the most interesting associations. The greatest beauty of inanimate matter arises from some resemblances we discover between particular qualities of it, and certain qualities or dispositions of mind: But the effect which such resemblances or analogies can produce, is feeble, in comparison of that which is produced by the immediate Expression of such qualities or dispositions in the Human Frame. Such resemblances also are few, as well as distant; but to the Expressions of the Human Frame there are no other limits than those that are imposed to the intellectual or moral powers of Man.

That a great part of the Beauty of the Human Countenance and Form arises from such Expressions, is, accordingly, very generally acknowledged. It is not however, supposed, that the whole Beauty of the

Countenance and Form is to be ascribed to this cause; and the Term *Expression* is very generally used to distinguish that species of Beauty which arises from the direct Expression of Mind, from that which is supposed to consist in certain visible appearances in the Countenance and Form. I shall endeavour now to shew, that the same principle of Expression is also the foundation of all the Beauty or Sublimity that is supposed to consist in certain visible appearances in the Countenance and Form, and that the whole Beauty or Sublimity which is to be found in the External Frame of Man, is to be ascribed to the various pleasing or interesting qualities, which are either directly or indirectly expressed to us by such appearances.

All that is beautiful or sublime in the Human Frame, may perhaps be included in the following enumeration:

1. In the Countenance.
2. In the Form.

3. In Attitude.

4. In Gesture.

For the sake of perspicuity, I am under the necessity of considering these subjects separately.

SECTION II.

Of the Human Countenance.

The Beauty or Sublimity of the Human Countenance arises from three sources. 1*st*, From its Colours. 2*dly*, From the Forms of the Features; and, 3*dly*, From the Composition of these Colours and Features.

PART I.

Of the Colours of the Countenance.

There are two distinct species of Colour in the Human Countenance which produce the Emotion of Beauty or Sublimity. 1*st*, The *Permanent*, and, 2*dly*, The *Variable* Colours of the Countenance. The first are the general and characteristic Colours of

the Countenance, the peculiarity of its Complexion, the Colour of the Eyes, the Lips, the Hair, the Beard, &c. The second are those Colours which are produced by particular or temporary affections of Mind, as the blush of Modesty, the paleness of Fear, the glow of Indignation, the vivid light which animates the Eye of Joy, or the dark cloud which seems to hang over the Eye of Melancholy and Grief, &c.

With both of these species of Colours, I think it will be acknowledged that we have distinct and important associations.

Of the Permanent Colours.

1. Such Colours have expression to us simply as Colours, and upon the same Principles which have formerly been stated *. It is thus that the pure white of the Countenance is expressive to us, according to its different degrees, of Purity, Fineness,

* Essay II. Chap. iii. Sect. 2.

Gaiety. The Dark Complexion, on the other hand, is expressive to us of Melancholy, Gloom, or Sadness. Clear and uniform Colours are significant of Perfection, and Consistency. Mixed or mottled Complexions of Confusion and Imperfection. In the Colour of the Eyes, Blue, according to its different degrees, is expressive of Softness, Gentleness, Cheerfulness, or Serenity. Black, of Thought, or Gravity, or of Sadness. A bright or brilliant Eye is significant of Happiness, Vivacity, and Gaiety; a dim and turbid Eye, on the contrary, of Confusion, Imperfection, or Melancholy. The reality of such associations is too well evinced by common experience and common language to need any farther illustration.

2. Certain Colours in the Countenance are expressive to us of Youth or of Age, of Health or of Disease, and convey to us all the Emotions which we thus understand them to express. There is no Child who does not distinguish between the bloom of

youth, and the paleness of old age, who does not understand the difference between the brilliant eye of Health, and the languid Eye of Disease, and who has not therefore acquired associations which are to govern his future life, and to make these permanent Signs of the accidents of the human frame, significant to him of the state or condition they express.

3. It is yet farther to be observed, that certain Colours in the permanent Complexion, are expressive (and very powerfully expressive to us) of peculiar Characters or Dispositions of Mind. In this respect all men are physiognomists. The opinions we form at first sight of the Character of Strangers, the language of the young, and the loose opinions we hear every day in the world, are all significant to us of some propensity to judgment from these external Signs: And when we investigate the foundation of these judgments, we shall find them chiefly to be rested upon the

associations we have connected with the Colours of the Countenance.

The Complexion, in this view, admits of four principal variations. It is either dark or fair, or pale or blooming. Each of these has established expressions to us. Dark complexions are expressive of Strength, of Gravity, and Melancholy, Fair complexions of cheerfulness, Feebleness, and Delicacy. The complexion, in the same manner, when pale, is expressive of Gentleness, Tenderness, and Debility; when blooming, of Gaiety, and Vigour, and Animation.

It is in the same manner that the Eyes admit of four principal Varieties of permanent Colours, which are accompanied with as many different expressions. They are either black or blue, brilliant or languid. Black Eyes are expressive to us of Thoughtfulness, Seriousness, Melancholy; Blue Eyes, on the contrary, of Softness, Serenity, or Cheerfulness. Brilliant Eyes are expres-

sive of Joy, Vivacity, Penetration; Languid Eyes, on the contrary, of Mildness, Sensibility or Sorrow. The different Compositions of such Colours in the Eyes, or in the Complexion, produces a correspondent variety or diversity of Expression.

Whatever may be the foundation of such Association, there seems to be no doubt of their reality, and a day scarcely passes in which, either in our own Experience, or in the language of Conversation around us, we may not be sensible of their existence. There seems, however, to be a sufficient foundation for some Associations of this kind, in our Experience of the permanent Connection of certain qualities of mind, with certain external appearances of Colour in the human Countenance. The two great varieties of Complexion, the Fair and the Dark, are, in fact, very generally found to be connected with the opposite Characters of Cheerfulness and of Melancholy; and so far is this from being a fanciful Rela-

tion, that it is generally admitted by those who have the best opportunities of ascertaining it, the Professors of Medical Science. The foundation of our Association of Paleness of Complexion with Delicacy and Debility, and of Bloom with Vigour and Animation, seems to be equally solid, as these colours are in general the signs of Health, or of Indisposition, and as commonly united with such qualities of body and such dispositions of Mind as they generally produce. The Expression of Colour in the Eyes, seems to arise from two different sources. Black Eyes are commonly united with the dark, and blue Eyes with the fair complexion. They have, therefore, the different Expressions of these different Complexions. With respect to the brilliancy or languor of the Eye, on the other hand, we have often reason to observe, that all joyful or animating affections, and all vigorous exertions of Mind, give Lustre and Brilliancy, and that all sorrowful, or dispiriting, or pathetic

emotions, give Softness and Languor to the Colours of the Eye. Such appearances, therefore, are early and strongly associated with the Qualities of mind with which they have so generally been found to be accompanied, and are naturally regarded as the signs of these qualities.

II

The Expression of the *Variable* Colours of the Countenance is still more distinct and precise. That the Affections and Passions of the Human Mind have correspondent appearances in the Colours of the Countenance, is a fact which all men understand, and have understood from infancy. There is no man who does not distinguish between the blush of Modesty and the glow of Indignation, the paleness of Fear and the lividness of Envy; the sparkling Eye of Joy and the piercing Eye of Rage, the dim and languid Eye of Grief and the open and passive Eye of Astonishment, &c.

These appearances are so uniform in the Human Countenance, and are so strongly associated with their correspondent affections of Mind, that even the first period of Infancy is sufficient to establish the connection. It seems to me, therefore, altogether unnecessary to illustrate farther the reality of these Associations.

I have thus very shortly stated some of the Associations we have with the Colours of the Human Countenance, or some of the Characters or Dispositions of Mind of which they are Expressive to us. It remains for me now to shew, that such Colours owe their Beauty or Sublimity to this cause; and that, when these Expressions are withdrawn, or no longer accompany them, our sentiment of Beauty or Sublimity is withdrawn along with them.

The Beauty of Colours, in this instance, must obviously arise from one or other of these three sources:

Either, 1*st*, From some Original Beauty in these Colours themselves; or,

2*dly*, From some Law of our Nature, by which the appearance of such Colours in the Countenance is fitted immediately and permanently to produce the Emotion of Beauty; or,

3*dly*, From their being significant to us of certain qualities capable of producing pleasing or interesting Emotion.

1. That such Colours are not beautiful *Simply as Colours*, or *as Objects of Sensation*, has been already sufficiently shewn in the former Chapter of Colours.

2. That we have no reason to suppose any Law of our Nature, by which certain Colours in the Human Countenance are immediately and permanently beautiful, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations:

1. If there were any such law of our nature, it would be obvious (like every other) in infancy. The child would mark its love

or admiration according to the complexion or colours of the Countenances of those who surrounded it: and its aversion would be shewn to all who varied from these sole and central colours of Beauty. The reverse of this is so much the case, that every one must have remarked it. For the first years of life, no sense of Beauty among individuals, in this respect, is testified by children. The Countenances of the old, on the contrary, with all their loss of colouring, are more delightful to them, than those of youth and infancy; and if there are any colours that appear to them as peculiarly beautiful, it is the pale Countenance of the mother, in whose looks they read her affection, or the faded complexion of the aged nurse, for whose looks they mingle love with reverence.

2. If there were any such law of Beauty, our opinions of such a kind would be permanent. One central colour in every feature or portion of the Countenance, would

alone be beautiful, and every deviation from it would be felt as a deviation from this original and prescribed Beauty. How much the reverse of all this is true, every man must have felt from his own experience? In Countenances of different character, we look for different tones of Complexion, and different degrees of Colour, In different individuals we admire not only different, but opposite Colours of Eyes, of Hair, of Complexion; and, what is still more, in the same individual, we admire, at different times, very different appearances of the same Colours, on the same Complexion. Such facts are altogether irreconcilable with the belief of any sole or central Colour, which alone is beautiful.

3. If there were any such Law of the Beauty of Colours, it would, like all the other laws of our nature, be *universal*, and all nations would have agreed in some certain Colours of the Human Countenance,

which alone were Beautiful. How far this is from being true, and how much, on the contrary, every nation has its own national and peculiar Sense of Beauty in this respect, it would be very unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

The remaining supposition is, that the Beauty of Colours in the Human Countenance is derived from their being significant to us of certain qualities, capable of producing pleasing or interesting Emotion.

That this is the case, and that the common sentiments of mankind are governed by this principle, may, I trust, appear from the following simple illustrations:

I.

The *same* Colour which is beautiful in one Countenance is not beautiful in another; whereas if there were any law of nature, by which certain Colours were permanently beautiful, these Colours alone would be

beautiful in every case. Of the truth of the fact which I have stated, no person can be ignorant. The Colours which we admire in childhood are unsuitable to youth; those which we admire in youth, are as unsuitable to manhood: and both are different from those which we expect, and which we love in age. Reverse the order, give to age the Colours of manhood, to manhood those of youth, or to youth those of childhood: and while the Colours are the same, every eye would discover, that there was something unnatural in their appearance, and that they were significant of very different Expressions, from those which we were in the habit of connecting with them.

The distinction of the Sexes, and the very different Expectations we form from them, afford another illustration. If any certain Colours are instinctively beautiful in the Human Countenance, they must be equally beautiful in every Countenance. Yet there is no one who does not expect a very different

degree, at least of Colour, in the two sexes; and who does not find, that the same Colour which is beautiful in the one, as expressive of the character he expects, is positively painful and disagreeable in the other. The dark red or the firm brown of Complexion, so significant to us in Man of Energy and Vigour, would be simply painful to us in the Complexion of Woman; while the pearly white, and the evanescent bloom which expresses to us so well all the gentleness, and all the delicacy of the female character, would be simply painful or disgusting to us in the Complexion of Man.

The same observation may be extended to all the professions of Human Life. In the Shepherd and in the Warrior, in the Sage and in the Citizen, in the Tyrant and in the Martyr, we imagine, and we expect very different Colours of Complexion. To these expectations, the Painter and the Poet have always instinctively yielded, and

in the imagination of Colour, have not less exhibited their powers, than in the conception of Feature, and in the disposal of Attitude or Gesture. Every Colour of the Human Countenance we feel to be beautiful only when it corresponds to the character which is presented to us; and every Colour, on the contrary, which is contradictory to the character that is meant to be expressed, we feel as imperfect or displeasing. Such feelings or conclusions, it is obvious, could never occur, if there were any certain or precise colours of the Human Countenance which were beautiful by some previous Law of Nature.

II.

The most *different*, and even *opposite* Colours are felt as beautiful, when they are significant to us of pleasing or of interesting qualities in the Countenances to which they belong.

There is nothing more opposite in point

of Colouring, than the bloom of youth to the paleness of old age, yet both we know are beautiful. We love the dazzling White of Complexion of the infant in its cradle. We love afterwards the firm brown of Colour which distinguishes the young adventurer in exercise or arms. In the recluse student, we expect the pale Complexion, which signifies watching, and midnight meditation. In the soldier and sailor we look for a Complexion hardened to climate, and embrowned with honourable toil. In all the variety of classes into which society has distributed mankind, we look for, in the same manner, some distinct Colouring as significant of this classification. We meet with it in the descriptions of the Poet, and the representations of the Painter, and we feel our minds unsatisfied if we do not discover it in real life.

No Colours can be more different than those of the Eyes and of the Hair. The dark and blue Eye; the fair and the black

Hair, are not only different, but almost opposite; yet who will pretend that they have not felt Beauty in all of them; and to what principle are we to ascribe the effect, if we maintain that there are only certain Colours in this respect which nature has made beautiful?

It is still farther observable, that even in the *same* Countenance the most different Colours are beautiful, when they are expressive of pleasing or interesting qualities. The blush of Modesty is very different from the paleness of Sensibility. The glow of indignation is equally different from the pallid hue of concentrated Affliction: the bloom of Health and Joy, from the languor of Sickness and Sorrow. Yet in the same person we may often witness these striking contrasts; and perhaps it would be difficult for us to say when the same Countenance was most beautiful. In the Colour of the Eyes, the same differences are observable: the dark and brilliant Eye may some-

times be veiled in dimness and distress. The softness of the blue Eye may be exalted to temporary vigour and brilliancy. The manly Eye of the Soldier may be suffused with Pity; and the timid Eye of Woman burn with just resentment or with dignified Scorn. In all such differences of Colour, we may still feel the Emotion of Beauty; an effect which could not possibly happen if there were any Law of our Nature, by which certain Colours only in the Human Countenance were productive of this Emotion.

III.

In pursuing these observations, it is still more important to observe, that our feelings of Beauty in the Colours of the Human Countenance, are so far from being precise and definite, as they would necessarily be, if they arose from any original Law of our Nature, that, in reality, they are altogether dependent on our *moral* opinions, and that

not only in respect to the Dispositions they signify, but even in respect to the *Degree* of these Dispositions. Of this very important fact, I shall offer only a few illustrations, because every one of my Readers is able to verify it to himself.

The difference of the permanent Colours of the Countenance is obvious to every one. Every one, however, has not observed, that the same Colours have affected him with very different Emotions, in different circumstances. There is a Paleness of Complexion which arises from Grief, from Sensibility, from Study. There is a similar paleness which arises from Envy, from guilty Fear, from deep Revenge. If the Colour alone were beautiful, its Beauty would remain in every case: but no one will say that this is true. The Beauty of the Colour to us, is always dependent upon the Disposition it signifies; the same Colour varies in its effect with the Expression, of which it is the sign; and the Painter, while he

spreads it upon his pallet, knows that by the same mechanical means, he can either create Beauty or Disgust, and make us, according to the Expression which it signifies, glow with moral admiration, or thrill with moral Terror.

The opposite Colour of the Countenance, the blooming or florid Complexion, is subject to the same moral Criticism. It is the sign to us in many cases, of Joy, of Hope, of Enthusiasm, of Virtuous Indignation, of kind and benevolent Affections. In all such cases, it is to a certain degree beautiful. In other cases, it may be the sign to us of Pride, of Anger, of intemperate Passion, of selfish Arrogance. In such cases, it is not only not beautiful, but positively painful. How often are we deceived in this respect, in our first speculation upon any human Countenance! and how permanently do we return to interpret the sign by the qualities we find it to signify, and to feel it either beautiful or otherwise by the nature

of these qualities! The aversion which mankind have ever shewn to the painting of the Countenance, has thus a real foundation in Nature. It is a sign which deceives, and, what is worse, which is intended to deceive. It never can harmonize with the genuine Character of the Countenance; it never can vary with those unexpected incidents which give us our best insight into human Character; and it never can be practised but by those who have no Character but that which Fashion lends them, or those who wish to affect a Character different from their own. The same observation may be extended to the Colours of the Eye. If we had no other principles of judgment than some original Law of our Nature, certain Colours, or Degrees of Colouring, would alone be permanently beautiful. How little this is the case; how much we appreciate the *language* of the Eye, on the contrary, and how strikingly its beauty is determined by the Emotions or passions

it signifies, I leave very securely to my readers to verify by their own Experience.

In the Variable Colours of the Countenance, or those which arise from present or transitory feelings, the same fact is easily discernible. No things, in point of Colouring, are so analogous as the blush of Modesty, and that of conscious Guilt; yet, when we know the Emotions they signify, is their effect the same? The paleness of Fear is beautiful, because it is ever interesting, in the female Countenance. Tell us, that it arises from some trivial or absurd cause, and it becomes immediately ridiculous. There is a Colour of indignation or of Scorn, which may accord with the most heroic Beauty; say to us, that it arises from some childish source of etiquette or precedence, and our sentiment of Beauty is instantly converted into Disgust. There is a softness and languor both in the light and in the Motion of the Eye, which we never see without deep interest, when we consider

it as expressive of general Sensibility, or of occasional Sorrow. Tell us, that it is affectation, that it is the *Manner* of the ill-judging fair one who has adopted it, and instead of Interest, we feel nothing but Contempt. Illustrations of this kind might be easily extended to every Emotion or Passion of the Human Mind. I leave them to the prosecution of my Readers; and I flatter myself, they will see that such Varieties in our sense of Beauty could never exist, if there were any certain and definite Colours in the human Countenance, which alone were originally and permanently beautiful.

PART II.

Of the Features of the Human Countenance.

There is a similar division of the Features of the Countenance of Men, as of its Colours, into what may be called (though with some restriction) the *Permanent* and the

Variable. The Permanent Features are such as give the individual Distinction, or form the peculiar Character of the Countenance in moments of Tranquillity and Repose. Such are the peculiar form of the Head, the proportion of the Face, the forms of the Forehead, Eyebrows, Nose, Cheeks, Mouth, and Chin, with their relation to the forms of the Neck, Shoulders, &c. The Variable Features are such Forms of the permanent Features, as are assumed under the influence of occasional or temporary Passions, as the contracted brow of Anger, the elevated Eyebrow of Surprise, the closed Eyelids of Mirth, the open Eye of Astonishment, the raised Lip of Cheerfulness, the depressed Lip of Sorrow, &c. &c.

With both of these appearances, I apprehend that we have distinct and powerful Associations; or, in other words, that they are expressive to us, either directly or indirectly, of Qualities of Mind capable of producing Emotion.

1. Such Forms in the Countenance, have expression to us simply as Forms, and are beautiful upon the same principles, as I have endeavoured to illustrate. Independent of all direct Expression, small, smooth, and well-outlined Features, are expressive of delicacy or fineness. Harsh and prominent Features, with a coarse and imperfect outline, of imperfection, roughness, and coarseness. The union of the Features (perhaps the most important of all physical observations), admits, in the same manner, either of a flowing and undulating outline, or of harsh and angular conjunction. The first is ever expressive to us of Ease, Freedom, and of Fineness, the second of Stiffness, of Constraint, and of Imperfection. These *indirect* Expressions prevail, not, indeed, over the more direct Expressions which intimacy or knowledge gives: but that they govern us in some degree with regard to those who are strangers to us; that we are disposed to attribute to the

Character of those who are unknown to us, the Character which their physical Features exhibit; and that even with regard to those we love most, we are sometimes apt to lament that the form of their Features is so little expressive of their Character, are facts which every one knows, and which need not be illustrated.

2. Such Forms of Features are, in general, *directly* expressive to us of particular Characters or Dispositions of Mind. That certain appearances or Conformations of the features of the Human Countenance, are significant of certain qualities or distinctions of mind, is a fact which every Child knows, even in its nurse's arms, and which, whether it arises from any original instinct, or from Experience, is yet sufficient to establish a natural language, long before any artificial language is formed or understood. There are probably three sources from which these Associations arise, 1*st*, the Expression of physical form, which I have

just stated; *2dly*, Experience of the uniform connection of such appearances with certain characters or dispositions of the human Mind; a fact of which no Evidence can be greater than that of the distinction which the infant makes between the countenance of Children, of Women, and of Men; and, *3dly*, The observation of the influence which habitual passions have upon the permanent conformation of the Features, and the consequent belief that the Sign indicates the Disposition usually signified.

Of the Variable Features it is unnecessary to enter into any Explanation. That the human Countenance possesses a degree of Expression in this respect, beyond every other animated Being; that, in its genuine State, it is the mirror of whatever passes in the Mind; and that all that is great or lovely in human character may there be read, even by the material Eye, are truths which every one knows, and upon which the Painter,

the Sculptor, and the Poet, have formed the most exquisite productions of their Arts. I cannot therefore fatigue my readers with any Enumeration of effects which all have known, and all must have felt.

That the Beauty or Sublimity of the Forms which occur to us in the Features of the Human Countenance arises from such Expressions alone, and not from any original Beauty in such Forms themselves, may perhaps be evident from the following illustrations.

1. If there were any original Beauty in peculiar forms of this kind, altogether independent of the Expressions of Mind we associate with them, it would necessarily follow, that the *same* Forms of Features would be permanently beautiful, and that every Form that deviated from this original and prescribed Form would, in the same degree, deviate from the Form of Beauty.

The slightest Experience is, I apprehend, sufficient to shew the falsehood of this opi-

nion. It is impossible to conceive a greater difference than takes place in the same Being, in the form and construction and proportion of Features, than that which uniformly takes place in the progress of Man from Infancy to Old Age. In this progress there is not a single feature which is not changed in form, in size, or in proportion to the rest: Yet, in all these, we not only discover Beauty, but what is more important, we discover it, at different ages, in forms different, if not opposite, from those in which we had discovered it before. The round Cheek, the tumid Lip, the unmarked Eyebrow, &c. which are all so beautiful in infancy, yield to the muscular Cheek, the firm and contracted Lip, the dark and prominent Eyebrow, and all the opposite forms which create the Beauty of Manhood. It is again the want of all this muscular power, and the new change of all the forms which it induces; the collapsed Cheek, the trembling Lip, the grey Eyebrow, &c. which

constitute the Beauty of Age. The Poet and the Painter know it; but were they, from any visionary Theory, to alter these Signatures of Expression; were they to give to manhood the features of infancy, however beautiful, or to age those of manhood, however eloquently commented upon, is there any one who, for a moment, could look upon their representations? It is needless for me to say, that the same observation extends equally to the Features that are characteristic of Sex; that the form or proportion of the same features is very different in the different Sexes; that even in that Sex where alone they are the general objects of Emotion, these forms vary with the progress of Time; and that in general, no Forms of Features are beautiful, but those which accord with the character we expect in the age or period of the person we contemplate.

With regard to the *Variable* Features, the proposition I have stated is yet more generally observable. If there is any pe-

culiar form of any Feature which is permanently beautiful, let the Inquirer state it to himself, and then let him examine the Countenances of actual Nature, or the representations of the Painter by this standard. He will find, if I mistake not, not only that this peculiar form has no permanency of Beauty, but, on the contrary, that it is often the reverse: that there is some other law that governs his opinion upon the subject; and that the most different conformations of the same Features are beautiful, or otherwise, according to the Emotions they signify. If the smooth and open brow of youth and gaiety is instinctively beautiful, the dark and wrinkled brow of Indignation, or Passion, ought to be positively displeasing: Yet the Experience of Nature, and of the Representation of the Imitative Arts, will shew us how false would be the conclusion. If the elevated Eyebrow of Hope or Mirth is beautiful, how shall we account for the still more powerful beauty of the contracted, and even

convulsed Eyebrow of Fear, of Horror, or of [illegible]. The Form of the Grecian Nose is said to be originally beautiful; and in many cases, and in the manner in which the artists of antiquity employed it, it is undoubtedly beautiful, because it is the conformation of that Feature which best expresses the Character they wished to represent. Apply, however, this beautiful Form to the Countenance of the Warrior, the Bandit, the Martyr, &c. or to any countenance which is meant to express deep or powerful Passion, and the most vulgar spectator would be sensible of dissatisfaction, if not of disgust. Is the Mouth of Youth, of Hope, of Rapture, beautiful? No contrast of the same feature can be so great as that of the same mouth, under the influence of Grief, of Age, or of Melancholy. And yet the Painter is able to render these Conformations beautiful, and they who have lived but a little in the world, have known, that they are in fact more beautiful, than all that the

same feature can receive from Hope, or Youth, or Joy. It were unpardonable to extend these illustrations to a greater length. It is enough to lead my readers to observe for themselves, and to attend to the general truth, That, if there were any forms of features originally and permanently beautiful; these, and these only, could be beautiful in all situations: and that every form that deviated from this prescribed and central Form, would necessarily be the object either of disgust or disappointment.

2. It is very easy to see, in the 2*d* place, that the most different Forms of Feature are actually beautiful: and that their Beauty uniformly arises from the Expressions of which they are significant to us. The open forehead is expressive to us of Candour and Generosity, and suits a countenance which has that Expression. The low forehead, on the contrary, is expressive to us of thought, of gloom, or melancholy. It becomes, therefore, a different Expression

of Countenance. The full and blooming cheek suits the Countenance of youth, and birth, and female loveliness: the sunk and faded cheek, the face of sensibility, of grief, or of penitence. The raised lip, the elevated eyebrow, the rapid Motion of the eye, are all the concomitants of joyous Beauty. The reverse of all these, the depressed lip, the contracted eyebrow, the slow and languid motion of the eye, are the circumstances which we expect and require in the Countenances of Sorrow or of Sensibility. Change any of these Conformations; give to the open and candid Countenance the low forehead; to the face of Grief, the fresh and blooming cheek of Joy; to the mourner the raised lip, or the elevated eyebrow, which are expressive to us of cheerful or joyous Passions; and the picture becomes a monster, from which even then the most vulgar taste would fly, as from soemthing unnatural and disgusting. If there were any real or original

Beauty in such Conformations, nothing of this kind could happen! And however discordant were our Emotions of Beauty and of Sentiment, we should still feel these Conformations beautiful, just as we perceive, under all circumstances, Colours to be permanently Colours, or Forms to be Forms.

3. The slight illustrations which I have now offered, seem to me sufficient to convince those who will prosecute them, that there is no original Beauty in any peculiar or distinct forms of the Human Features. There is another illustration which perhaps may still more strongly shew the real origin of such Beauty to consist in the Expressions of which they are significant, *viz.* That the same Form of Feature is beautiful or not, just as it is expressive or not of Qualities of Mind which are amiable or interesting to us.

With regard to the Permanent Features, every one must have remarked, that the

same Form of Feature which is beautiful in the one sex is not beautiful in the other; that as there is a different Expression, there are different Signs by which we expect them to be signified; and that in consequence, the same Signs are productive of very different Emotions, when they are thus significant of improper or of unamiable Expressions. They who are conversant in the productions of the Fine Arts, must have equally observed, that the Forms and Proportions of Features, which the Sculptor and the Painter have given to their Works, are very different, according to the nature of the Character they represent, and the Emotion they wish to excite. The form or proportions of the features of Jove are different from those of Hercules, those of Apollo from those of Ganymede, those of the Fawn from those of the Gladiator. In Female Beauty, the form and proportions in the features of Juno are very different from those of Venus, those of Minerva from

those of Diana, those of Niobe from those of the Graces. All, however, are beautiful, because all are adapted with exquisite taste to the characters they wish the Countenance to express. Let the Theorist change them, and substitute for this varied and significant beauty, the forms which he chooses to consider as solely beautiful; and the experiment will very soon shew, that the Beauty of these Forms is not original and independent, but relative and significant: and that when they cease to be expressive of the character we expect, they cease in the same moment to be beautiful.

The illustration, however, may be made still more precise; for even, in the *same* Countenance, and in the *same* Hour, the same Form of Feature may be beautiful or otherwise. Although there is an obvious distinction between the permanence of some features of the Countenance, it is at the same time true, that even the permanent features are susceptible of some change

of form; that they vary with the employment of the muscles which move them; and that, therefore, their permanence is rather relatively than positively true. The forehead changes in its form and dimensions, with various passions. The line of the Nose is varied by the elevation or depression of the muscles of the Eyebrow; and its whole form is still more altered by the Contraction or Expansion of the Nostrils. The cheeks sink or swell, as they are influenced by different Emotions: And no one need to be told that the mouth is so susceptible of Variety of Form, that from that feature alone, every one is able to interpret the Emotion of the Person. The same observation is applicable to the rest of the features. If there were, therefore, any original Form in all these Features, which was instinctively beautiful, it would allow, that, in all these changes, there was one only that was beautiful, and that all the rest would, according to their variations,

be, in so far, deviations from Beauty. The real fact however, is, that every one of these varieties are beautiful, when they are expressive to us of Emotions of which we approve, and in which we sympathize; that none is beautiful when it has not this expression; that any feature unsusceptible of these changes, would be felt as imperfect or monstrous; and that the degree of Change or variation, which is beautiful or otherwise, is always determined by its correspondence to our sentiment of the propriety or impropriety of the Emotion which it signifies. The Reader will find innumerable illustrations of this truth, both in his observation of common nature, and of the representations of the Painter and the Sculptor.

With regard to the *variable* Features, (those which are expressive of momentary or local Emotion) that the Beauty of their Forms does not arise from their approach to any one standard, but from the nature of

the Expressions they signify to us, is a Truth which may be easily observed in the study even of the same Countenance. Nothing can be more different in point of form, than what occurs in the same face, in the muscles of the eyebrow, in the close or open conformation of the eyelids, in the contraction or dilatation of the nostrils, in the elevation or depression of the lips, in the smoothness or swelling of the muscles of the throat and neck: yet all of these are beautiful, or at least susceptible of Beauty. It may have been our fortune to see all these variations of form to have taken place in the same Countenance, within the space of a few hours. And if we recollect our sentiments, we shall find, that all of them were not only beautiful, when they were the genuine Signs of Emotions with which we sympathized, but what is more, that they were the *only* forms which, in such circumstances, could have been beautiful: That their variety corresponded

to the variety of Emotions which the mind experienced; and that any other conformations of Feature, however beautiful in other circumstances, would then have been painful or distressing. If any of my Readers have not felt this in their own experience, let them attend (while it is yet in their power) to the Countenance of Mrs Siddons, in the progress of any of her great parts of Tragedy. Let them observe how the Forms and Proportions of every Feature vary with the Passions which they so faithfully express; let them mark every variety of Form almost, of which the Human Countenance is capable, take place in the space of a few short hours; let them then ask themselves what is the common source of this infinite Beauty; and although, in this Examination, they will still have but a feeble sense of the excellencies of this illustrious Actress, they will be sensible, that there is no original or prescribed Form of Feature which alone is beautiful, but that every

Conformation is beautiful when it is expressive of the Emotions we expect and approve.

PART III.

Of the Composition of the Colours and Features in the Human Countenance.

The illustrations which I have given in the two former Sections, relate to the Beauty of the Colours or features of the Countenance, as single or individual objects of Observation. It is very obvious, however, that all these are only parts of *a whole:* that some relation, at least, exists between those parts of the Countenance, and the Countenance itself: and that there is some harmony or accordance which we expect and demand in the Composition of these ingredients, before we feel that the whole is beautiful. The investigation of the principles which govern us in our sentiments of Composition will, I trust, afford an addi-

tional proof of the real Nature and origin of Human Beauty.

If there were any original and independent Beauty in any peculiar colours or forms, it would then necessarily follow, that the union of these beautiful forms and colours would compose a Countenance of Beauty, and that every deviation in Composition from these original principles of Beauty would, in proportion to this deviation, affect us with sentiments either of indifference or disgust. If such were the constitution of our nature, the Painter and the Sculptor would possess a simple and determinate rule for the creation of Beauty; the beautiful forms and colours of the Human Countenance would be as definite as the proportions of Architecture: and the production of Beauty might be as certainly attained by the Artist, as arithmetical Truth is by the Arithmetician. That this is not the case; that the Beauty of the Human Countenance is not governed

by such definite rules; and that there are some other qualities necessary for the Painter and the Sculptor, than the mere observation of physical appearances, are truths with which every one is acquainted, and which therefore it would be unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

If, on the other hand, the principles which I have before attempted to illustrate are just, if the Beauty of every individual colour or form in the Countenance, is determined by its Expression to us of some pleasing or interesting quality, then it ought to follow, (as in all other cases of Composition), That the expression of the whole ought to regulate the Beauty of the parts; that the actual Beauty of these parts or ingredients, ought to depend upon their relation to the general Character; and that the Composition therefore should only be beautiful, when this relation of Expression was justly preserved, and when no colour or feature was admitted, but what

tended to the production of one harmonious and unmingled Emotion.

That this is really the case: that our opinion of the Beauty of the Human Countenance is determined by this Law, and that, in every particular case, our sense of the Beauty of the constituent parts is decided by their relation to the prevailing Character or Expression of the Countenance, may perhaps be obvious from the following considerations:

I.

I have formerly endeavoured to shew, that in the case of physical forms, no form was, in reality, beautiful to us, which was not the Sign of some pleasing or interesting Expression, or which, in other words, was not productive of some Emotion. It is natural to think, that the same law should be preserved in the Forms, &c. of the Human Countenance; and it is still more natural to think so, when we consider, that the Expressions of the Countenance are the direct

Expressions of Mind. That the Beauty, therefore, of every Countenance, arises from its Expression of some pleasing or interesting quality, in which our Imagination loves to indulge; and that no countenance is ever felt as beautiful where such indirect or direct Expressions are not found, is a Proposition (I trust) which the Readers of the previous illustrations will both expect and demand. The truth of it may, perhaps, be elucidated by the following illustrations.

1. I would appeal, in the 1*st* place, to common experience.—If the real Beauty of the Human Countenance arises from the union of certain Forms and Colours, that are originally beautiful, then every Man ought to feel the Sentiment of Beauty in those cases alone, where those certain appearances were united. Of the truth of this proposition every man is a judge. I will presume, on the contrary, to say, that there is no Man who has ever felt the sentiment of Beauty, who will not acknowledge, that

he has felt it in the most various and even opposite conformations of Features; that he has felt, that instead of being governed by any physical Law of Form or Colour, it has been governed by the individual circumstances of the Countenance; that whenever it has been felt, it has been felt as significant of some pleasing or interesting disposition of Mind; that the union of every feature and colour has been experienced as beautiful, when it was felt as expressive of amiable or interesting sentiment; and that, in fact, the only limit to the Beauty of the Human Countenance, is the limit which separates Vice from Virtue; which separates the dispositions or affections we approve, from those which we disapprove or despise.

If this evidence should be insufficient, there is a yet stronger one, which arises from the usual language of Mankind. We hear, every day, the Admiration of Beauty;—Ask, then, the Enthusiast to explain to you, in

what this Beauty consists? Did he feel that it were in any certain conformation of Features, or any precise tone of Colouring that Beauty consists, he would tell you minutely the forms and proportions and colours of this admired Countenance; and were this the law of your Nature, you could feel it only by this physical description. But is it thus, in fact, that the communication is made? Is it not, on the contrary, by stating the *Expression* which this Countenance conveys to him? Are not the forms and magnitude of the features, and the tone and degree of colouring, made all subservient, in his description, to the Character of Mind he wishes to convey to you? And do you not feel, at the same time, that if he succeeds in persuading you of the lovely or interesting Expression of the Countenance, you take for granted, at once, that whatever may be the form of the features, or the nature of the colouring, the Countenance itself has that simplicity and strength of Expression which justifies the admiration

of the person who describes it? All this, however, which may happen every day, is utterly inexplicable upon any other principle, than the foundation of Beauty in Expression; and the language itself would be unintelligible, if it arose only from some definite form of features, or definite appearance of Colour.

The observation may be extended to the usual and habitual language of the world. There is no one who must not have observed that the description of human beauty in common life, is always by terms significant of its Expression. When we say that a Countenance is noble, or magnanimous, or heroic, or gentle, or feeling, or melancholy, we convey at once to every hearer, a belief of some degree of Sublimity or Beauty; but no one ever asks us to describe the form of the features which compose it. When we differ, in the same manner, with regard to individual Beauty, we do not support ourselves by any physical investigation of Features. It is the

character of the Countenance we disagree in; and when we feel that this Character is either unmeaning, or expressive of unpleasing dispositions, no conformation of features, and no splendour of colours, will ever render it beautiful to us. How much this is the case in Society; how much the opinion of Beauty is dependent upon the character of the mind which observes it; how profusely the good find beauty in every class of mankind around them: how much, on the contrary, the habits of vice tend to obliterate all the genuine Beauty of nature to the vicious, must, to every man of common thought, have been the subject both of pleasing and of melancholy observation.

It is observable, in the same manner, that the most beautiful Countenance is not permanently and uniformly beautiful, as it necessarily would be, if this Beauty arose from any original law of our nature; but that its Beauty is always dependent upon the nature of the temporary Dispositions, or qualities of

Mind which it signifies. Every man who has had the good fortune to live in the society of beautiful women, must often have observed, that there were many days of his life, and many hours in every day, when he was altogether insensible to their Beauty. The little unmeaning and uninteresting details of domestic life; the usual cares and concerns of female duty; sometimes, perhaps, the irritations and disturbances of domestic economy, produce Expressions which are neither interesting or affecting; and, while they produce these, the beauty of the countenance (however latently great) is unfelt and unobserved. Whenever the Countenance assumes the Expression of any amiable or interesting Emotion, the Beauty of it immediately returns.

While there is scarcely any Countenance that thus remains beautiful under the Expression of vulgar or uninteresting Emotions, and none which can preserve it under the dominion of vicious or improper

dispositions, it may at the same time be observed, that there are very few Countenances which are not raised into Beauty, by the influence of amiable or lofty Expression. They, who have had the happiness to witness the effects of sudden joy or unlooked-for hope in the Countenances, even of the lowest of the people;—who have attended to the influence of sorrow, or sympathy, in the Expression of faces unknown to affectation—they, still more, who have ever looked steadily upon the bed of sickness or of Death, and have seen the influences of submission and of resignation upon every feature of the suffering or Expiring Countenance, can, I am persuaded, well tell, that there is scarcely any form of features which such interesting and lofty Expressions cannot and do not exalt into Beauty. It is on the same account, that the young who live familiarly together, are so seldom sensible to each others Beauty. The Countenance, however beautiful, must often appear

to them with very unmeaning and uninteresting Expressions: The quiet detail of domestic life gives birth to no strong emotions in the Countenances of either; they meet without animation, and they separate without tenderness; the habits of simple friendship call forth no transports of passion; and they go abroad into less known societies, to look for those agitations of Hope or Fear which they do not experience at home. To lovers, on the contrary, and for the same reason, every look and every feature is beautiful, because they are expressive to them of the most delightful emotions which their age can feel; because the Countenance is then animated with Expressions the most amiable and genuine which it ever can display, and still more, perhaps, because they are the signs to them of those imaginary scenes of future happiness, in the promise of which Youth and Love are so happily profuse.

It is the same principle which is the obvious cause of the infrequency of Beauty

among the lower orders. Something of this is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the influences of climate, and of weather, and to the negligence of those Arts, by which, in the higher ranks of life, the physical Beauty, at least of Feature and of Complexion, is so assiduously preserved. But the principal cause of it is in the character of Mind, which such situations too naturally create. They who live for subsistence cannot live for Beauty. The occupations in which they are engaged, the modes of life to which they are doomed, are little consistent with any amiable or interesting emotions; and their Countenances, therefore, (however latently beautiful), express nothing to us but low care or painful occupation. In their usual hours, therefore, their Beauty is scarcely more than that of Youth and Health; and we observe it with satisfaction rather than pleasure. Let us follow them however, from these vulgar and degrading occupations, into the scenes of their gaiety

and enjoyment—let us follow them into scenes of distress or sympathy, when finer emotions are excited, or when their Countenances waken into correspondent expression, and we shall be astonished to find, that amid the most common Features, Beauty arises, and amid the most common forms, Grace is to be found. In every country of Europe, I believe, in the same manner, the Traveller has felt that the greatest Beauty exists among women of the highest rank, or in those who live in affluence and independence; and it ought to be so. They who live not for subsistence, but for society; who, from their earliest days are unbroken by labour, or by care; who, still more, exist for their hour only in the search of admiration, are under the necessity of gaining it by every flattery to the feelings of others, by assuming virtues if they possess them not, and by counterfeiting, for the time at least, every disposition of mind, and every expression of Countenance, which renders society amiable, or woman lovely.

Observations of this kind may be extended to every scene almost of our intercourse with mankind. I presume only to add the following, which perhaps every one of my readers can verify by their own experience.

Were the beauty of the Human Countenance dependent altogether upon certain forms or colours, it would be very difficult to account for those different Beauties of age or sex, in which all men and all ages have agreed. If we consider them as arising from the expression of those qualities or dispositions which we expect and love in sex and in age, we shall find no difficulty in reconciling the facts with the theory. In men and in women, every Countenance is to a certain degree beautiful, which is expressive of interesting or amiable dispositions; and from the cradle to the grave, every conformation of the Human Countenance is in some measure beautiful, which is significant of the qualities or Character of Mind, which we think that age ought to display.

There is, however, a difference in this respect; and it is obviously with very different sentiments that we regard male and female Beauty. The one we regard with Love and Admiration, the other scarcely with more than satisfaction. Of these different sentiments the account is simple. The forms of the male Countenance in manhood, are not, in general, expressive of very amiable qualities, nor do we expect them. It is Spirit, Thought, Resolution, which we look for as the predominant Expressions of that age; but none of these are Expressions extremely interesting to us, and all of them may be painful or exaggerated. The dispositions of Mind, on the contrary, that we look for in the female Countenance, are Modesty, Humility, Timidity, Sensibility, and Kindness. These are dispositions which we never observe without deep emotion. They are not only delightful in themselves, but they are such as we expect in that sex; and there is no expression of

them which does not affect us, both with the tenderness of love and with the sentiment of propriety. But while this is the case with the Countenance of manhood, it is not the same (as every one has observed) with other periods of male existence. Infancy is equally beautiful in the one sex as in the other, and the early youth of man (before it is corrupted by the business of the world,) is not unfrequently susceptible of as great a degree of Beauty as is, perhaps, ever to be found in human conformation. In old age again, the male Countenance reassumes, as it were, its Beauty; because the character it expresses, the disposition which it displays, and, still more, the melancholy contrast which we draw between its maturity and its decline, affect us with Emotions of a far more profound and exquisite kind, than we ever experienced in the noon-day of its strength. I forbear to add to those illustrations, and I have stated them with all the brevity in my power, because I wish my

readers to observe for themselves, and because I am satisfied, that they who will exert this attention, will soon be convinced of the truth of the proposition.

2. While the Beauty of every Countenance seems thus fundamentally to arise from the expression of some pleasing or interesting quality, I would observe, in the second place, that the composition of the Countenance is dependent upon the preservation of the Unity of this expression, and that our sense of the Beauty of the individual colours or features, is always determined by the preservation of this relation.

There are properly three distinct species of Beauty of which the Human Countenance is capable. 1*st*, Physical Beauty, or that of Forms or Colours, considered simply as Colours or Forms, and independent of any direct Expression of Character or Emotion. 2*dly*, The Beauty of Character, or the Expression of some permanent and distinctive disposition of amiableness or in-

terest. And, 3*dly*, The Beauty of Emotion, or the expression of some temporary or immediate feeling which we love or approve. In each of these distinct cases, I apprehend our common experience will justify us in concluding, that the Beauty of the Countenance depends upon the preservation of the unity of expression; and that our opinion of the Beauty of the separate Colours or Features, is uniformly governed by their relation to this end.

1. There are many Countenances which are beautiful only as physicial objects, which signify no Character of Mind, and of which we judge precisely in the same manner as we do of inanimate forms or colours. They are significant to us of Strength or Delicacy, of Coarseness or Fineness, of Health or Indisposition, of Youth or of Age, &c. but they are significant of nothing more. Of Countenances of this kind (whatever be their Character), our sense of the Beauty of every separate feature is uni-

formly determined by its relation to this general character, and the Countenance is only wholly beautiful when this relation is preserved. Our judgments of this kind are so common and so rapid, that we very seldom examine upon what they are founded; but a very few illustrations will be sufficient to satisfy any one that they ultimately rest upon this unity of expression. Features, small in form and fine in outline, with a complexion clear and pale, are generally expressive to us of Delicacy, Gentleness, Fineness, &c. To such a Countenance, give the addition of a Roman Nose, or tumid Lip, or thick and heavy Eyebrows, &c. and every one feels that the Beauty of the Countenance is destroyed. We see that there is inconsistence in the arrangement: we lament it; and we busy ourselves in imagining the form of feature that is wanted, and which would render the whole complete.——To a Countenance of manliness and vigour, in which the general form of

the colours and features bear a relation to the general character, add one feature of infant or of feminine Beauty; a Grecian Nose, a small Mouth, the round Cheek, or the small and regular Teeth of infancy: The Countenance is not only hurt, but becomes ludicrous; and yet the destructive feature is, in other cases, singularly beautiful.—— There is Beauty in the smooth complexion of Youth, and in the wrinkled and furrowed Complexion of Age, in the paleness of the delicate form, and in the high bloom of Health and Enjoyment, in the open front of Honour and Vigour, and the close and contracted brow of Thought and deep Reflection, &c. &c. Yet let them be fortuitously mingled, or let the Painter attempt to use them as elementary principles of Beauty, and every one will feel that their Beauty depends upon relation, and that this Relation is that of their correspondence to the general expression of the Countenance. It would be absurd to multiply il-

lustrations upon a subject which every one expresses almost every day of his life, in the language he uses with regard to Human Beauty.

2. The truth of the proposition is still more apparent in relation to the second species of Beauty, or that of Character. Wherever, in actual life, we are conscious in any great degree of the influence of Beauty, we shall always find that it is in the general or characteristic expression of the countenance; that the language by which we describe it to others, or by which we attempt to explain it to ourselves, is always by terms significant of this expression; that the expressions which are not interesting to us are never the foundation of Beauty to us, however much they may be to others; that the degree of Beauty we perceive is uniformly correspondent to the degree of this expression which we love or approve; and that this Beauty is in fact either felt or unfelt, precisely as the state of our own

minds induces us either to sympathize or not with the disposition of mind which the countenance displays. These are truths of which, I apprehend, every one who has ever attended to the history of his own feelings must immediately be conscious. If it were possible, however, to doubt, that the Beauty of colour or feature in any countenance arises from their correspondence and subservience to the general character of the expression, the following hints may perhaps be sufficient to satisfy it.

1*st*, When we find fault with any feature or colour in a characteristic or expressive Countenance, what is the reason of our objection, and the principle upon which we defend it in conversation? 2*dly*, When we meet with this want of correspondence in any beautiful countenance, do we attribute it to the absence of some positively beautiful form or colour, or to the want of harmony with the general tone and character of the countenance? 3*dly*, Are not the most

different forms and Colours of the Countenance beautiful, when they are felt as the signs of just and interesting expressions; and is any form or colour, however beautiful in one circumstance, capable of being transferred to others, without affecting us with emotions very different from Beauty? *4th*, When we imagine to ourselves some Countenance of unmingled Beauty, does the operation of our fancy consist in bringing together single and individual colours or features which we have seen in individual cases as beautiful: or does it consist in composing them into one imaginary whole, in which every feature and colour unites in the signification of one lovely or interesting expression, and in which we see the character we love, unmingled and unallayed by the usual discordance of vulgar features? *5th*, When the Statuary, or the Painter, have executed any of those great works which command the admiration of ages, is it by uniting together features or colours of indi-

vidual Beauty? or is it by seizing, as by inspiration, the character they wish to represent, by throwing off all the incumbrances of vulgar nature, and by bringing out the general and ideal correspondence of every line and every colour to the character he pourtrays, and thus leaving upon the mind of the spectator, that pure and unmingled emotion which he is never destined to feel in real life? To these queries, every one is able to answer; and I flatter myself, the answer to them will be sufficient to convince any candid mind, that the real Beauty of the features of the countenance is ultimately determined by their relation to the general expression; that many which are beautiful in one case are not beautiful in others; and that their real Beauty consists in their correspondence to that unity of character which we ever expect and demand in this higher species of Beauty.

3. The same mode of reasoning may easily be extended to the third species of

Beauty, or that which arises from temporary or accidental emotion. The great object of the Painter (of modern times at least), has been to represent the countenance under the dominion of such strong or sudden Emotions; the Beauty which is generally admired upon the stage, is that which is represented in scenes of deep interest or effect; and every one must have perceived, in common life, that, in moments of such a kind, the influence of Beauty has been felt in a very different degree from what it is in the tranquil scenes of ordinary life.

Every one, perhaps, has formed to himself some general conception of the Beauty of the Human Countenance, under the influence of Innocence, Gaiety, Hope, Joy, Rapture,—or under the dominion of Sensibility, Melancholy, Grief, or Terror, &c. If he attends to the nature of this operation of fancy, he will find that the principle which governs this ideal composition is that of unity of

expression; that he admits into this sketch no feature or colour which does not correspond with the character which interests him; and that he is at last only satisfied when he has formed the conception of one uniform and harmonious whole. If we look to our actual experience, we shall find, in the same manner, that the same obstacles occur as in the case of characteristic Beauty which I have just mentioned; that few Countenances possess this opulence of expression; that some unmeaning feature either checks, or some contradictory feature destroys, the unity of the expression; and that, when we wish to feel it in reflection, we are under the necessity of throwing out the discordant feature, and composing a new and more harmonious combination.

Of the many circumstances of common observation which are evidences of this truth, I limit myself to the mention of a very few.

Whenever the Countenance has any dis-

tinguished character, it is seldom susceptible of Beauty, when under the dominion of opposite or unanalogous emotions. In countenances of deep Melancholy, laughter is painful. In those of extreme Gaiety, melancholy is not less so. Dignified features are disgraced by mirth, and mirthful features made ridiculous by the assumption of dignity. Nothing is more distressing than for the manly Countenance to affect the look of softness or effeminacy; and nothing more absurd than for the effeminate Countenance to affect the expression of manliness. Such observations are in the power of every one; and I believe it will universally be found, that whenever the Countenance possesses any characteristic species of Beauty, no Emotion is ever beautiful in it, but such as accords with this predominant expression.

It is on the same account that our experience of the different dispositions that become the different ages of life, govern, in

so great a degree, our opinion of the Beauty of the Countenance in those different ages. We expect mirth and joy in Infancy; firmness and vigour in Manhood; gravity and serenity in Old Age. Nothing is more painful to us than the confusion or alteration of these expressions. Gravity in youthful features; or the heedless mirth of infancy in the features of maturity; or the passionate joy of youth in the features of old age, are expressions which we never observe without censure or disgust, and which, however beautiful in other cases, are in these painful and revolting. It is hence too, very obviously, that there arises a certain propriety or decency which we expect in men of different professions; and that the expressions of Countenance which we feel as beautiful or appropriate in one character, we feel as very different in others. The fearless and gallant look which we love in the Sailor and the Soldier, we should disapprove in the countenance of a Judge, and still more, in

that of a Minister of Religion. The gravity and sober thought which we expect in the looks of these, we should again disapprove in the Courtier or the Man of the World. We expect a different expression in the Countenance of the great Merchant and the little Shopkeeper, in the Landlord and the Farmer, in the Teacher of Science and in the Disciple. Each of these may be appropriate, and so far beautiful; but we feel them only as beautiful in their proper cases, or when they correspond to that general character of expression which we expect in such cases. I forbear to allude to the expressions of the female countenance; to the peculiar emotions which are beautiful in it, which do not extend to the other sex; to the degree of emotion which we expect in it, in comparison with that of men; and to the painful sentiments we feel, when female features assume the expression of man, or those of men assume that of woman,

because they are within the reach of every person's observation.

3. The illustrations which I have offered of the truth of the general proposition, "That the Beauty of Colours or features "in the Human Countenance, is estimated "by their harmony or correspondence "with the general expression, and from no "original or positive Beauty in themselves," has been supported by that reference to common fact and common experience, of which every reader can judge. There is another argument, which arises from our consciousness, in which, perhaps, some of my readers may find a deeper interest.

If there were any original Beauty in certain colours or forms of the Human Countenance, or if the human mind were adapted to experience the emotion of Beauty only from such forms or colours, it would then inevitably follow, as in the case of every other sense, that one single and individual sentiment of pleasure would be

felt upon such appearances; that the emotion of Beauty would be a simple and unassociated sentiment; and that language everywhere would have conveyed it with the same unity and accuracy, as it does the sentiments of right or wrong, of justice or injustice.

If, on the contrary, our sense of the Beauty of such forms or colours, is dependent upon their relation to a general expression; if our sentiment of their Beauty varies with that relation; and if the same forms and colours that are beautiful in one case are not beautiful in others, then it ought to follow, that our consciousness and our language (as expressive of that consciousness) should vary with the different circumstances of composition; that instead of one peculiar emotion of Beauty, we should experience as many different emotions of Beauty as the qualities of the Human mind can excite; that the Countenance of each sex, and of every age, should be

susceptible of Beauty wherever the composition of its features, &c. corresponded with the character we expected and wished; and that no Countenance should be felt, or be expressed by us, as beautiful, but when the conformation of the various features and colours, corresponded with the characteristic, or temporary character, which we wished and expected under the circumstances in which we perceived them.

Which of these two theories is the most just, or the most correspondent to our plain and common experience, I willingly leave to my readers to determine.

From the Illustrations I have offered in this Chapter, with regard to the origin of the Beauty of the Human Countenance, there are some general Conclusions which seem to follow, which it may not be unuseful to the observers of Nature to attend to; and to the Artists who are engaged in the

representation of beautiful Nature to remember.

I.

There seem to be three distinct sources of the Beauty or Sublimity of the Countenance of Man.

1*st*, From Physical Beauty, or the Beauty of certain Colours and Forms, considered simply as Forms or Colours.

2*d*, From the Beauty of Expression and Character; or that habitual Form of Features and Colour of Complexion, which, from experience, we consider as significant of those habitual Dispositions of the human Mind, which we love, or approve, or admire. And,

3*d*, From the Beauty of Emotion; or the Expression of certain local or temporary Affections of Mind, which we approve, or love, or admire.

II.

Each of these Species of Beauty will be

perfect, when the Composition of the Countenance is such as to preserve, pure and unmingled, the Expression which it predominantly conveys; and when no Feature or Colour is admitted, but which is subservient to the Unity of this Expression.

III.

The last or highest degree of Beauty or Sublimity of the Human Countenance, will alone be attained when *all* these Expressions are united; when the physical Beauty corresponds to the Characteristic; when the Beauty of temporary Emotion harmonizes with the Beauty of Character; and when all fall upon the heart of the Spectator as one whole, in which Matter, in all its most exquisite Forms, is only felt as the sign of one great or amiable Character of Mind.

SECTION III.

Of the Beauty and Sublimity of the Human Form.

THE same principle which leads us to ascribe the Beauty of inanimate Forms to some one original and independent configuration of beautiful form, has a tendency to mislead us with regard to the Beauty of the Human Form. In some species of form we perceive Beauty; in others, we perceive none. Of so uniform an effect we believe there must be an equally uniform cause; and as the apparent cause is in the nature and circumstances of the Material Form, we very naturally satisfy the indolence of inquiry, by supposing that there must be *some one* appearance or character of this Material Form which is originally beautiful; and that, of consequence, the ab-

sence of Beauty arises, in any case, from the absence of this peculiar and gifted form. Such is the first and most natural theory of mankind. It is that which we universally find among the lower ranks of men; and which, though it does not satisfy them, perhaps, in any individual case to which they give their attention, is yet sufficient to give them something like a general principle, which, while it has the appearance of truth, has still more the great convenience of Theory, that of saving them from the labour of farther investigation. Of this popular and infant theory, it is needless for me to enter into any investigation. It is always abandoned as soon as men are capable of observation; when they are able to perceive, that there is in fact no such supposed form of original Beauty; and when they begin to feel, from their own experience, that the sentiment of Beauty is felt from many different and even opposite appearances of Human Form.

From this early hypothesis, the next step has uniformly been to the imagination of someo riginal Beauty in certain *proportions* of the Human Form. The belief that there s one central and sacred form which alone is beautiful, must be abandoned as soon as men are capable of observation. But the natural prejudice to refer the cause of this emotion to the material qualities alone which excite it, is not so soon abandoned; and as these are susceptible of measurement and precision, there is an obvious motive given, both to the philosopher and the artist, to establish a correspondent precision in the system of the one, and the productions of the other.

The Human Form is composed of different parts. In the natural or in the imitated form, there are some relations or proportions of these parts, which are everywhere felt as beautiful. It is natural therefore to conclude, that the adoption of such measures or proportions will always

secure the production of the same effect; it seems hence naturally to follow, that the latent Beauty of form arises from these peculiar proportions; and that if these proportions were precisely ascertained, there would be a certain rule given, by which the production of Beauty, in this respect, would infallibly be attained. Artists, accordingly, in every age, have taken pains to ascertain the most exact measurements of the Human Form, and of all its parts. They have imagined also various standards of this measurement; and many disputes have arisen, whether the length of the head, of the foot, or of the nose, was to be considered as this central and sacred standard. Of such questions, and such disputes, it is not possible to speak with seriousness, when they occur in the present times. But it ought at the same time to be remembered, that this theory, however imperfect, was yet a step (and indeed a great one) in the progress, both of the art and

of the science of Taste. It supposed observation,—it animated attention; and what is more, under the name of *physical* proportion (as I shall afterwards shew), it involved the study of higher and more genuine proportion. The artist, in attending to the rude grammar of his language, learned something of its spirit and capacity; and when the progressive expansion of genius left behind it the rules and proportions of the school, the philosopher learned also to extend his induction, and to perceive that there were other principles by which his emotions were governed, and which were yet remaining for his investigation.

Of this second theory, therefore, "That "there are *certain* relations or proportions "of the different parts of the Human Form, "which are originally and essentially beau- "tiful, and from the perception of which "all our sentiment of Beauty in this respect "arises"—it is, I trust, now unnecessary for

me to enter into any lengthened refutation. Yet, as some opinions of this kind yet linger among connoisseurs and men of taste; and as the anxiety for some definite rules of judgment is ever more prevalent among such men, than the desire of investigating their truth, it may not be unuseful to suggest the following very simple considerations, which every one of my intelligent readers must fully have anticipated.

1. If there were any definite proportions of the parts of the Human Form, which, by the constitution of our nature, were solely and essentially beautiful, it must inevitably have followed, that the beauty of these proportions must have been as positively and definitely settled as the relations of justice or of geometry. To take an original sense for granted, and, at the same time, to suppose, that the indications of this sense are variable, or contradictory, is a solecism in reasoning which no man will venture to support. If such a sense is supposed, then the

universal opinion of mankind ought to be found to agree in some precise and definite proportion of the parts of the Human Form. If the opinions of mankind do not agree in such certain and definite proportion, then no peculiar sense can be supposed to exist, by which these sentiments are received.

That not only the sentiments of mankind do not agree upon this subject, but that the sentiments of the same individual differ, in a most material manner, is a truth very susceptible of illustration. There is no form, perhaps, in nature, which admits of such variety, both in appearance and proportion of parts, as the body of man; and which, therefore, seems so little capable of being reduced to any definite system of proportion. The proportions of the form of the infant are different from those of youth; these again from those of manhood; and these again perhaps still more from those of old age and decay. If there were any instinctive sense of beauty in form, in this

long history, there would be one age only in which this sense could be gratified. Yet every one knows, not only that each of these periods is susceptible of beautiful form, but, what is much more, that the actual Beauty in every period consists in the preservation of the proportions peculiar to that period, and that these differ in every article almost from those that are beautiful in other periods of the life of the same individual. The same observation is yet still more obvious with regard to the difference of sex. In every part of the form, the proportions which are beautiful in the two sexes are different; and the application of the proportions of the one to the form of the other, is everywhere felt as painful and disgusting. If, however, there were any original and essential Beauty in some definite proportion of parts, such effects could never happen. This definite Proportion, in every case, would be solely beautiful, and every variation from it would affect us as a deviation

or opposition to the genuine form of Beauty.

It may be observed, in the same manner, that if the Beauty of form consisted in any original proportion, the productions of the fine arts would everywhere have testified it; and that in the works of the Statuary and the Painter, we should have found only this sole and sacred system of proportion. The fact however is, (as every one knows), that in such productions no such rule is observed; that there is no one proportion of parts which belongs to the most beautiful productions of these arts; that the proportions of the Apollo, for instance, are different from those of the Hercules, the Antinous, the Gladiator, &c.; and that there are not, in the whole catalogue of ancient statues, two perhaps, of which the proportions are actually the same. Against the hypothesis of an instinctive Beauty in proportion, no fact can be so decisive as this. If there were any original Beauty in pecu-

liar proportions of the Human Form, the artists of antiquity must have perceived it, when it was so easy a matter to ascertain it, only by the labour of measurement and calculation; and that their productions are independent of such definite proportions, and that their effect is still produced, amid all this variation of proportion, are irrefragable proofs, not only that the Beauty of their works is not dependent upon such a theory of proportion, but that it arises from some higher causes, and from some more profound attention to those feelings of human nature in which the sentiment of Beauty is to be found.

2. If there were any original Beauty in certain proportions of the Human Form (independent of all other considerations), then it must necessarily follow, that the same proportions of that form would in all cases be beautiful, and that all other proportions would affect us with sentiments of pain or of displeasure. If such a theory were main-

tained, let the philosopher state with accuracy the proportions that are thus instinctively beautiful. Let him then examine whether this doctrine corresponds with the most obvious facts in nature. The various ages of Man are, in some cases, and in all cases may be made, beautiful by the genius of the Painter or the Statuary. Are the rules of proportion applicable to all these cases? and do we admire the form of the child, the youth, the man, and the aged man, because they retain, amid all their changes, the same proportions? Is the Beauty of the female form demonstrable only because it contains the same proportions with that of Man? and is every thing that deviates from the male proportion, a blemish and a deviation from Beauty in the female? These are obvious considerations; the pursuit of them, however, will lead every one that is capable of observation, to still more satisfactory conclusions. If it is still farther supposed, in aid of this infant theory, that there are

certain proportions in Sex, and in the various ages of human life, which are originally beautiful, it will not easily be supposed or maintained, that there are similar instincts correspondent to the casual occupations of mankind; and that in every age in the progress of society, and in every society into which civilized man is formed, new or accidental instincts must be given, by which alone he can perceive the Beauty of the forms around him. Yet all this must be supposed, before, upon these principles, it is possible to account for the sentiments we every day feel, and for the illustrations which the artist every day gives us, with regard to the Beauty of proportion. We see every day, around us, some forms of our species which affect us with sentiments of Beauty. In our own sex, we see the forms of the legislator, the man of rank, the general, the man of science, the private soldier, the sailor, the labourer, the beggar, &c. In the other sex, we see the forms of the matron, the

widow, the young woman, the nurse, the domestic servant, &c. Is it by the principle of Proportion alone, that in all these cases our sentiment of Beauty is determined? Are the proportions the same in all these cases? Is not in fact our sentiment of Beauty determined by the difference of these proportions; and would not the application of the same principles to each, destroy altogether the characteristic Beauty which we expect and look for in such different cases? It is obviously the same in the arts of Imitation. We expect different proportions of form from the Painter, in his representation of a warrior and of a shepherd, of a senator and of a peasant, of a wrestler and of a boatman, of a savage, and of a man of cultivated manners. We expect, in the same manner, from the statuary, very different proportions in the forms of Jove and of Apollo, of Hercules and of Antinous, of a Grace and of Andromache, of a Bacchanal and of Minerva, &c. It is of no

consequence at present *why* we expect all this, and why the greatest Artists have so faithfully fulfilled this expectation. It is only of consequence to observe, that all this could not happen if there were any sole and original Beauty in certain proportions alone; and that, if this had been the case, neither could we have formed the expectation, nor could the Artist have dared to obey it, by deviating from the sole and established principle of Beauty. The farther prosecution of this illustration I leave very willingly to the reader.

If the Beauty, then, of the Human Form does not arise from any certain proportions which are solely and essentially beautiful, we must look for the source of it in those expressions, of which (like every other material form) it may be significant to us.

There are two principal classes of expression, which the Human Form seems to me to have to us, and which I shall consider separately, as they are the foundation of

very different kinds of Beauty, and have not, perhaps, been so accurately distinguished as they deserve.

I.

The first of these expressions is that of *Fitness* for the end for which the form was designed. The Human Body is a machine fitted for many and important ends; every member of it, in the same manner, has distinct employments, and may be either well or ill formed for these ends. The knowledge of this fitness in the whole form, or in the various parts of it, we learn from our own experience, and from our continual observation of others; and the appearance of every form immediately suggests to us the ideas either of fitness or unfitness for these ends. That the appearance of fitness, in this respect, is pleasing and satisfactory to us; and that the appearance, on the contrary, of any unfitness, either in the general form or in any of its members, is painful and unsatisfactory

to us, are propositions which need no illustration. Our opinions upon the subject are perhaps very seldom very accurate or scientific, and the standard by which we judge is, in general, perhaps, only the common or average form. But that we have all some standard of judgment on this subject, and that we actually feel this sentiment, either of fitness or unfitness, in observing the forms of those around us, the experience of every day may convince us.

It is this expression of *Fitness* which is, I apprehend, the source of the Beauty of what is strictly and properly called *Proportion* in the parts of the Human Form. The considerations which lead me to this opinion are the following:

1*st*, From language. The terms of proportion and of fitness are convertible. If we describe to any person the circumstances of a form perfectly fitted for the animal ends of men, we give him immediately the idea of its proportion. If we describe a

form in any respect unfitted for these ends, we give him immediately, in the same manner, the conception of disproportion. If, on the other hand, we describe a form, or a part of the form, as well or ill-proportioned, we immediately convey the idea either of the fitness or unfitness of the form, &c. Such circumstances could not occur, if our sentiments on these subjects arose from different causes.

2d, Our sensibility to the Beauty of proportion is limited by our knowledge of this fitness. Children, it may always be observed, though sensible to the Beauty of forms from other causes, are very late of being sensible to the Beauty of proportion, obviously because they have not yet acquired the knowledge upon which the sense of this relation is founded. Every one may have observed, in the same manner, that women are very imperfect judges of the beauties of proportion in the male figure, and that their sentiments of Beauty are formed upon very different principles; because they are na-

turally unacquainted, from their own experience, with the various ends to which this fine machine is so wonderfully adapted; and while they remain ignorant of them, they want that sense of fitness upon which the sentiment of proportion is founded. The common professions of society demand the exertion of certain members of the body, in preference to the rest, and each has the tendency, therefore, to give peculiar strength and amplitude to these peculiar members. Such appearances of the human Form are perhaps unpleasing to the general spectator, as deviations from the common forms. But to those who consider them in the view of the ends which they serve, they not only acquire the beauty of proportion, but the form would appear to them imperfect and unsatisfactory without these appearances. Every one expects a different conformation of members in the soldier, the sailor, the waterman, the shepherd, the huntsman, the ploughman, &c.; and every

painter accommodates himself to this expectation. If we ask what is the cause of this difference of our expectation, we shall find it to be in our previous knowledge of the purposes which they serve; that the conformation which is suited to the end, has always to us the Beauty of proportion; and that, when we assign our reason for our approbation, the reason is always that of fitness for the occupation of the person. When we are ignorant of this end, we never fail to feel the conformation unpleasing.

3d, When the opinion of fitness varies, the sense of proportion uniformly varies with it. The most striking illustration of this proposition is in the sentiments we feel with regard to the form and proportions of the sexes. Nothing is more pleasing or satisfactory to us, than the full proportions of the male form, when every member of the form is significant to us of the vigour and energy for which we know it was designed. The same proportions in the female form

are both painful and unsatisfactory. Nothing, in the same manner, that form can exhibit, is so beautiful as the genuine proportions of the female form, yet nothing is so positively painful, and even shocking, as the appearance of such proportions in the form of man. We may trace the influence of the same opinion, in our judgments of the proportions which are pleasing to us in the progress of the individual form, from infancy to manhood. In the age of infancy we look for health and happiness, and vivacity, but not for energy or strength. The pleasing proportions of that age are, therefore, those only which are conducive to those ends; and the appearance of premature strength or energy, always affects us with a sense of something unnatural and monstrous. In the form of youth, we look for vivacity, agility, speed, and all the incipient marks of muscular power; but we do not look for the traces of confirmed strength, or habitual exertion. It is in man-

hood only, that we expect the full evolution of the members of the human Form; and that we learn those general maxims of proportion, which not only guide our opinion of the form in that age, but which, in some measure, guide also our opinions of the different forms of the same individual in earlier ages, as the signs or indications of the promised and mature form. In these different stages of human Life, it is obvious that the proportions of the same form are very different, and it is equally obvious, that they are pleasing only when they are accommodated to the ends which we conceive to belong to these different periods.

We are conscious of the same effect in the opinions we form of the proportions of the Human Body, in the various business and occupations of life: and the most different conformations are pleasing to us when they are significant of their fitness to these occupations. We expect a different form, and a different conformation of limbs,

in a running-footman and a waterman, in a wrestler and a racing-groom, in a shepherd and a sailor, &c. If, with the idle and ineffectual labour of the connoisseur, we should measure the proportions of the Faun and the Gladiator, the Hercules and the Antinous, the Jupiter and the Apollo, we should find that not only the proportions of the form, but those of every limb were different; and that the pleasure we feel in these proportions arises from their exquisite fitness for the physical ends which the Artists were consulting, and not from any original or definite conformations, which alone are pleasing, independent of any such fitness. Even the most unobserving of mankind are yet conscious of the influence of this opinion; and we have only to attend to the common language of conversation to perceive, that men, in general, judge of the propriety of every form by its suitableness to the profession, or age, or occupation of the person; and that some sentiment of dissatisfaction

is always expressed, when this fitness or suitableness does not appear in the peculiar form or configuration.

4th, I would observe, in the last place, that the sentiment of pleasure we feel from proportion in the Human Form is precisely similar, both in kind and degree, to that which we experience from the appearance of fitness in other subjects. The sentiment of fitness is a pleasing and satisfactory one, but it is not (in itself) a sentiment of much effect or enthusiasm. We are pleased, but not transported: it satisfies the understanding, but it has little effect upon the imagination. The sentiment we experience from the observation of proportion in this subject, is precisely similar. The just or expedient conformation of the human Form, or any of its members, to their ends, is undoubtedly a pleasing and satisfactory observation; but it is not one, which (of itself) leads to any deeper emotion. We are more displeased with its absence, than pleas-

ed with its occurrence. If we describe to any person a form of this kind, we shall find that we give him satisfaction rather than emotion; and if we wish to give him the impression of Beauty, we shall also find that we must have recourse to other principles, and suggest other images to his mind, than those of mere fitness or proportion.

If the reader has followed me in the preceding slight illustrations, he will be induced to conclude: 1*st*, That there are no original and definite proportions which *alone* are beautiful, by any peculiar law in the Human Form. 2*dly*, That the Beauty of these proportions (whenever they are felt), is resolvable into the more general Beauty of fitness. And, 3*dly*, That this expression of fitness, though a source of calm and satisfactory pleasure, is yet very insufficient to account for the intense and profound delight we are conscious of experiencing from the appearances of the Human Form.

Proportion, therefore, though necessary to the Beauty or Sublimity of the form of man, does not constitute it. Every one knows that forms may be perfectly proportioned, and yet not be beautiful. In its proper and restricted sense, it is the just relation of animal members to the ends of an animal Frame; and it is a term, therefore, equally applicable to the forms of animals as to those of man. In so far as it influences our minds, it is a source rather of negative than of positive Beauty; without it, Beauty cannot exist, but it does not exist in it alone; and to account, therefore, for the effects we feel from the appearances of the Human Form, we must look for other causes, and higher principles.

II.

The second class of expressions which the form of man has to us, is that of CHARACTER, or of some amiable or interesting quality of mind. When we consider the

form only as an animal frame, we determine its Beauty only by its fitness for the ends of animal existence; when we consider it as the habitation of Mind, we perceive it to be significant, in every member, of the disposition or character of that mind.

'That such expressions exist; or that the Human Form is actually significant to us of mental qualities, and, as such, is productive of the emotions which such qualities in themselves produce, is proved beyond dispute by the universal language of mankind. We not only speak of Forms as majestic, or heroic, or gentle, or benevolent, or gay, or spirited, or melancholy, or despondent, &c.; but, what is much more, they are the only terms in which, in infant languages, or among the common people, the Human Form is described and distinguished. The progress of Art, indeed, gives to the Artist and the Connoisseur the advantage (and with it all the abuses) of technical terms; but in every country, the great

body of mankind adhere to their first impressions, and distinguish the individual forms of those around them, by the qualities of mind of which they feel them to be significant. Without pretending to any accurate enumeration, I apprehend the following sources of expression are consistent with every man's experience.

1. From the nature of Form itself; in the same manner as has formerly been explained in the case of inanimate forms. Thus smooth and polished surfaces are expressive to us of fineness, and some kind of animal perfection; slender and attenuated forms, of fineness, gentleness, tenderness, &c.; forms which are described by flowing and waving outlines, of delicacy, ease, and pliability. The opposite appearances in the Human Form; rough or unpolished surfaces, square or massy substances, sharp or angular outlines, are naturally expressive to us of the contrary qualities of rudeness, coarseness, harshness, and imperfection.

That such effects are produced upon our minds by the appearances of the Human Form, may be very often observed in the opinions we form of the character of strangers, when we have no better grounds of opinion; and that they have always some effect, even in the impressions we receive from the forms of those we know best, I think every man will at least suspect; who attends to his own feelings.

2. The different forms of age and of sex (for I must limit myself to the great illustrations which nature affords me), are expressive to us, from experience, of different characters, and become thus significant of those characters. The peculiar forms of infancy are expressive to us of innocence, ignorance, feebleness, thoughtlessness, and vivacity. Those of youth, are expressive to us of sprightliness, activity, hope, and ardour. The mature form of man is expressive of strength, fortitude, thought, and the capacity of exertion. The

mature female form is expressive of delicacy, modesty, humility, beneficence, and tenderness. The peculiar forms of old age in both sexes, of decay, diminished strength, abated capacity, and approaching dissolution. That these different expressions exist in these different forms, it were surely unnecessary to attempt to illustrate.

3. The form is susceptible of another class of expressions, as an animal form. Thus, there are certain appearances which are significant to us of health or disease, of strength or of weakness, of activity or of inactivity, of agility or of unwieldiness, of ease or of constraint, &c. &c. The least attention to our own experience, or to the language of others, may easily convince us, both how generally these expressions occur in our observation of the human Form, and how strongly they affect us with correspondent sentiments either of pleasure or pain.

4. The greatest and the most important class of expressions, however, of which the

appearances of the form of man are significant to us, is that of peculiar characters or dispositions of MIND. Of the certainty and universality of this fact, it would be absurd to enter into any formal illustration. We acknowledge it ourselves, whenever we describe any form as majestic, humble, gay, thoughtful, despondent, &c. We understand it, whenever we hear the language of others describe them in the same terms; and we recognize it, whenever, in the works of the painter or the statuary, we feel ourselves affected by emotions of awe, admiration, respect, pity, or sympathy.

Whether the knowledge which all men, in some degree, have of these expressions, is to be ascribed to an original sense, or whether (as is more probable) it is the result of experience, is a question of no consequence in the present inquiry. It is sufficient for me, if it is allowed, that the forms of the Human Body are descriptive of characters of mind: that the form, for in-

stance, is expressive of dignity, another of humility, another of gaiety, another of melancholy, &c. &c.; and that such forms actually convey to us the belief of the dispositions and characters of which we have generally found them significant. If it is allowed that they have such expressions, it will not easily be denied, that such expressions must have their natural and necessary influence upon our feelings and emotions.

I may be permitted however to state, that there are many reasons, both in our own experience, and in our observation of the frame of others, which may lead us very early to some general conclusions of this kind. Every one knows how much the form of man is affected and changed by the passions which happen to influence him. There is no child who does not know the distinction between the form of dignity, of arrogance, of humility, of supplication, of pity, of melancholy. When we come to

think of these varieties, we cannot fail to perceive, that every passion has its distinct influence upon the form and proportions of the general frame; that all the animating and cheerful passions, such as hope, ardour, fortitude, magnanimity, &c. have an effect in dilating and extending the general form; and that all those passions, on the contrary, which are dispiriting or depressing, have a contrary effect, in contracting the limits, and diminishing the proportions, and lessening the volume of the general form. Were observations of this kind carried as far as they deserve, I am persuaded it would be found that every genuine passion has its own peculiar influence upon the form, by its influence upon some peculiar members of it; that certain passions have certain effects, either in the contraction or dilatation of certain parts of the Human Frame; and that the language of the form might be made as intelligible by the Painter or the Statuary, as the language of the voice is

made by the composer of genius. It belongs to the artist to pursue inquiries of this kind. It is sufficient for me only to observe, that there are certain indications in the Human Form of the dispositions which inhabit it: that different passions produce different conformations of the members and proportions of this form: that habitual dispositions are necessarily accompanied by habitual conformations: and that from this experience we all become sensible to these effects, and do in fact judge and speak of the Forms of those around us, as expressive of these characters or dispositions.

That it is from these sources, or from the expression of pleasing or interesting qualities or dispositions of mind, that the Human Form derives all its positive Beauty, appears to be evident, from the following considerations.

1. Every form which is felt as expressive of amiable or interesting character, is in some degree or other beautiful. Whenever

we speak of a form as being heroic, or majestic, or compassionate, or tender, or gay, or modest, melancholy, &c. we always convey to others, and we mean to convey, the opinion of Beauty. Whenever such a description is made to ourselves, we are uniformly impressed with the belief of Beauty in that form. In the works of the Painter and the Statuary, all the forms which represent pleasing or interesting characters of mind, are beautiful; and all those which express painful, or vicious dispositions, are of an opposite character. If our sense of the Beauty of Form arose from material proportions alone, and were altogether independent of expression, such a coincidence could not happen. Forms would be beautiful only as they approached to a certain material standard; and whatever were the expressions they signified, our sense of their Beauty would be determined, not by this expression, but by their approach to or deviation from this standard.

2. The most different forms are beautiful when they are expressive of interesting characters. What can be so different as the forms of infancy, of youth, of manhood, of old age? Yet all are beautiful when they are expressive of the character which belongs to that age. What similarity is there between the forms of hope and of humility, of melancholy and of heroism, of fortitude and of compassion, of joy and gratitude? Yet all of these are beautiful. How different, in every respect almost, are the genuine forms of sex? and yet no one will pretend that Beauty is limited to one alone. If our sense of Beauty in the Human Form were the result of material appearances only, such differences of effect would be altogether impossible.

3. The sentiment of Beauty which we feel in these cases, is precisely similar to those which we feel from the characters of mind of which such forms are expressive. If the emotion of Beauty were the effect of

any law of our nature by which certain forms or proportions were immediately productive of this emotion, the emotion itself would be an uniform and homogeneous one, and would differ only in degree but not in kind. Every sound and colour produces one definite sensation, and all colours and sounds of the same kind, according to their degree, produce the same sensation. If there were any peculiar sense, by which the emotion of Beauty, with regard to forms, were received, the emotion would in every case be similar, and as readily distinguishable from all other emotions, as the sense of sound is from that of colour, or the sentiment of justice from that of expedience.

In his experience of the Beauty of forms, I apprehend, every man is conscious that there is no such uniformity of emotion, as any sense of material Beauty, independent of all expression, would produce. In his admiration of the forms of heroism, of gaiety, of majesty, of pity, of grief, of resigna-

tion, is it one uniform and peculiar emotion he feels? or is it, on the contrary, an emotion founded upon the peculiar character he contemplates, and which corresponds to the emotion he feels from the same character of mind, when he meets with it in real life, or when it is represented to him in the page of the historian or the novelist? It would be a singular anomaly in nature, if the same cause should produce in our minds gaiety and sadness, admiration and pity, laughter and tears: Yet all these different effects are produced by the appearances of the Human Form; and, in all these various and contradictory appearances, we at the same time feel the sentiment of Beauty. No imaginable theory seems to be able to account for these discordant facts, which rests upon any original sense of Beauty in Form alone; and no other theory seems to be able to include them, but that which attributes the origin of Beauty to the Expressions of which the

form is significant, and which therefore admits of every variety of form as beautiful, which is expressive of pleasing or interesting character.

4. In the preceding observations, I have considered the Human Form only as a simple form, the Beauty of which was to be determined either by some law of material form, or as significant to us of various interesting and affecting characters of mind. Fearful as I am of fatiguing my readers, I must yet entreat their patience to follow me in another view of the subject; in which, I apprehend, the same truth will more strongly appear, and from which, perhaps, some conclusions may be derived of consequence, both to the Artist and the man of philosophic taste.

The Human Form is not a *simple* form. It is a complicated frame, composed of many parts, in which some relation of these parts is required by every eye, and from which relation, beauty, or deformity, is the actual and

experienced result. If the principle which I have stated is just, if the positive Beauty of the Human Form arises, in all various and different cases, from its expression of character of mind, then it ought to follow, that the beauty of Composition in this complicated form ought (as in all other cases of composition), to arise from the preservation of Unity of character; that no forms or proportions ought to be felt as beautiful, but those which accord with this central expression; and that different forms and different proportions ought to be felt as beautiful, whenever they are significant of the characters we wish and expect. If these are found to be facts, I apprehend it will not only be sufficient to shew the real origin of the Beauty of form, but to establish some more definite conceptions, with regard to the nature of the Beauty we experience in these relations of the parts of the Human Form.

That the Beauty of composition in the

form of man is determined by this unity of character or expression, or in other words, that the principle by which we judge of the Beauty of any member or members of the form, is that of their correspondence to the general expression, is a proposition which seems very consistent with common experience. Every form which we remark for Beauty, has always some specific character which is the foundation of our admiration. It is either manly, or gallant, or majestic, or dignified, &c.; or feminine, or gentle, or modest, or delicate, &c.: as such we feel, and as such we describe it. It seldom happens, however, in actual life, that any form of this kind appears to us in which we are not conscious of some defect, of some limb or member being unsuitable to the rest, and affecting us with some sense of pain or dissatisfaction. If we ask ourselves what is the reason of our disapprobation, or if we attend to the language of others, we shall find, I think, that it is al-

ways resolvable into the want of correspondent expression; and that the imaginary attempts we make to rectify it, consist in new-modelling the faulty members, so as to accord with this expression. It is painful to us, thus, to see a form of general delicacy, with any strong or muscular limb; to see a bust of manliness or strength, with limbs either short or attenuated; or limbs of great strength and vigour, with a thin and hectic form of body, &c. In the general form of woman, it is, in the same manner, painful to observe any limb of masculine size or strength; and so delicate is even the rudest feeling upon this subject, that the form of a foot, or of a finger, can detract from the most perfect Beauty. When we have the misfortune to witness any defect of this kind, we wish, and perhaps we express our wishes, to remedy it; and what is the object of our wishes? Is it not to reduce the too powerful, or to increase the too attenuated limb to the general character of the

form; to maintain throughout it that unity of expression which is necessary to our complete emotion; and if, either in idea or in imitation, we can succeed in these wishes, do we not feel ourselves, and teach others to feel, the full effect of that beautiful form, which nature or accident has left imperfect? Is it not consistent, in the same manner, with general experience, that in describing a beautiful form to those who have not seen it, we always begin by stating the character which it signifies; and if we end by asserting that all the various members of the form correspond in maintaining this characteristic expression, do we not succeed in convincing them that the form is beautiful, and that its composition is as perfect as its expression?

The standard, I believe, by which we chiefly estimate the general character of the form, is that of the expression of the Countenance. We very seldom, I apprehend, pretend to judge of the *Beauty* of the form

of any person, whose countenance we have not yet seen. Of a mutilated statue, of which the head was lost, we might speak securely of the propriety of its mere physical proportions, but I think we should not speak with equal security of the Beauty of the composition of its members. In studying any of the greater forms of statuary or painting, I conceive, in the same manner, that we shall feel in ourselves, and that we may observe in others, that our eye is perpetually moving from the countenance to the form; that until we feel distinctly the character which the Countenance expresses, we are at a loss to conceive the meaning of the composition; and that when we do feel it, we then immediately conceive that we are in possession of the key by which the form and the proportion of every member is to be estimated. The moment, either in the observation of nature or of the arts of imitation, that we feel the Countenance to be expressive of character, we instantly

expect and look for, an unity in the composition of every member of the form. The most insignificant portions of the frame seem then to arise into meaning and consequence; we demand that all of these should contribute, by the nature of their character, to the general character of the Countenance; and if any of them are defective, we lament either over the accidents of nature, or the incapacity of the artist. Were we to state to any person, that a statue had all the proportions which the assiduity of technical taste had ascertained, that every limb was fashioned according to the most approved rule, and the whole composed of the most perfect individual members, the impression, I think, we should leave upon him, would be, that it was a work of consummate art, and that the labour of the artist was deserving of much reward. Were we, on the other hand, to state to him, that this statue had some great or interesting character, that the Countenance

expressed some heroic or some amiable passion, and that every limb and every line of the form was in full correspondence with this expression, I apprehend we should give him the conviction, that the statue was a masterpiece of genius, and that no language of enthusiasm was superior to its deserts.

In prosecuting this inquiry (and I attempt nothing but to lead the minds of my readers to the prosecution of the subject for themselves), I trust they will find that the second proposition, or, "that no forms or "proportions are actually felt as beautiful, "which do not accord with the character-"istic expression of the general form," to be equally consistent with experience. It is undoubtedly natural, at first, to imagine, that a beautiful form is that which consists of beautiful parts, and that, therefore, nothing more is necessary than to unite the most beautiful parts together. Such is the first rude idea of the mind of taste; and

such also, perhaps, the first attempt of the young artist. A very little experience is sufficient to overturn this infant theory. It teaches, both in nature and in the imitation of it, that the mere assemblage of beautiful parts, is not sufficient to constitute Beauty; that some other principle is wanting; and that no forms or proportions are in themselves essentially beautiful, but as they accord with the character of the whole form, and unite with its peculiar expression.

There is no man, however ignorant of the language of Taste, who would not feel shocked at seeing the delicate arm of a woman joined to the body of a warrior, or the athletic limbs of the warrior, united with the form of youthful gaiety, or the muscular bust of labour with the light and elastic limbs of joy and activity; each of these parts, however, are beautiful in peculiar circumstances: and why are they here disapproved of,—but because they do not agree with the character of the form, and contradict the expres-

sion we are prepared to indulge. Nothing that the genius of man has ever produced, is, perhaps, so beautiful as the limbs of the Belvidere Apollo, and the forms which reign in the head and neck and bust of the Medicean Venus. Yet let us, even in fancy, apply these exquisite forms to any other statue; let us give to the form of Jove or Hercules the limbs of the Apollo, and to those of Juno or of Minerva the head and bust of the Venus, and we should feel the assemblage not only painful, but ludicrous. If we were asked, or if we were to ask ourselves for the reason of this displeasure, we should immediately say, that it was because these forms were discordant with the general character; and that they affected us precisely in the same manner as we are affected in real life, when we see age or dignity counterfeit the manners of youth, or matron gravity assume the affectation of youthful bashfulness. These indeed are extreme cases: but they are important in shewing the principle from

which our most common judgments are formed; and whoever will prosecute the inquiry by his own observation, will perceive, that even in his most familiar intercourse with others, it is this demand which chiefly determines them: that in every form which we feel as characteristic, we look for unity in the expression of its parts: and that our criticisms upon the forms of those around us are permanently occasioned by the want of this correspondence, and the contradiction we feel between the expression of the limbs and that of the general form. It is unnecessary for me to say, that such feelings and such criticism never could take place, if there were any essential Beauty in such forms, independent of all expression.

These observations (slight as they are) lead so necessarily to establish the truth of the third proposition, "that different forms "and different proportions of form are felt "as beautiful, when they correspond with the

"character of the general form," that I can scarcely presume to fatigue my readers with any illustration. If no forms of parts are beautiful but those which accord with the general expression, it must follow that different forms of these parts may be beautiful. How fully this is the case, we have the testimony of experience. Nothing is more different than both the forms and proportions of the same members, in infancy, in youth, in manhood, and in age; yet in all of these we discover Beauty, when they are expressive of the character which is amiable, or respectable, or interesting in these different periods of human life. I forbear to speak of the difference of sexual forms, and of the principle which so obviously determines the difference of our admiration. I leave my readers to attend to the illustrations which painting, and which, above all, statuary can afford them, where they will find that the great masters of this art have governed themselves by principles very dif-

ferent from those who, in later ages, have satisfied themselves with the humble glory of being their admirers and expositors: that the deep effect which they have produced, is by the magical harmony of their composition: that in this study, they have made use of the most different forms, and proportions of form, in every member of the human body: that there are not perhaps two examples existing, in which these proportions are to be found the same; and that, even in the representation of the same ideal being, these proportions are found to vary, whenever the expression, by which it was distinguished, varied either in kind or degree. I shall only observe, that the principle from which they executed their unrivalled works, is the same which the lowest of us experience in daily life. We are all acquainted with the influences of passion or emotion upon the general form, and upon its different members; and we every day judge of the existence of such emotions or

passions by such appearances of the form. Even in the same individual we have seen perhaps all these changes take place; the muscular limbs of health and the shrunk limbs of disease, the elevated chest of hope or ardour, and the bent form of despondence or grief, the firm and compressed form of fortitude, or the lengthened and elastic spring of gaiety or joy, &c. We have felt the influence of these expressions of mind, therefore, even in the same individual: under different forms and proportions of form, we have recognized, by this experience, the principle which has given to the statuary his power over the feelings of mankind; and whenever we look back upon our experience, we shall find that the forms which we thus felt as most beautiful in the same individual, were permanently those which were expressive of the most amiable or the most interesting dispositions of mind. They who have sufficiently felt the power of theatrical representation, who have at-

tended not only to the voice and the countenance, but to the variety of form, or proportions of form, which Mr Garrick and Mrs Siddons assumed, according to the passions they represented, will feel better than by any cold illustration, that different forms are capable of Beauty, and that all are beautiful which express noble passions and interesting emotions.

From the illustrations, which I have limited myself to suggest only, but not to pursue, I flatter myself my readers will perceive, that the form of man is actually significant to us of two distinct and important expressions. 1*st*, As a physical form, in which the form itself, and every member of it, is expressive either of fitness or unfitness for its physical ends. 2*dly*, As a form expressive of Mind, in which every passion or emotion has its distinct signs, in the appear-

ance of the form itself, and in the appearance of its different members.

The term Proportion has unfortunately been promiscuously applied to both expressions; and in the ambiguity of the term both the artist and the philosopher have been often misled, in their research into the origin of this Beauty.

I am not presumptuous enough to attempt to introduce any new language into a science where technical terms are so rigidly cherished; but I may presume to suggest to my younger readers, a very simple rule, by which they may know to what cause they are, in such cases, to ascribe the emotions they feel.

A Human Form has all the beauty of strict *proportion*, when nothing hurts us in its form, and when no impropriety appears in any of its members for the physical ends, for which the form, either in nature or art, is designed.

A human Form, on the contrary, has

only the Beauty of *character*, when some amiable or interesting disposition of mind is expressed by it, and when we perceive a positive relation between the expression of every different member, and the expression of the general character.

Some attention to this distinction may perhaps be of use both to the man of genuine taste, and to the artist.—It may relieve the first from the trammels of technical language, and raise him to higher speculations than the usual schools of art permit or employ; and it may teach the latter, that his ambition is only to be gratified when he can excite the sympathies of mankind, and make the Human Form expressive of all that the Human Mind can either exert or feel.

I finish this long section, by stating the general conclusions, with regard to the

Beauty that is peculiar to the form of man, which seem to follow from the considerations I have suggested.

That the Beauty or Sublimity of the Human Form, does not arise from any original and essential Beauty in this form, or in its composition.

II.

That there is a negative species of Beauty necessary to every beautiful form, but not constituting it, which arises from the expression of physical fitness or propriety.

III.

That the real and positive Beauty of the form arises from its expression of some amiable or interesting character of Mind, and that the degree of this beauty is proportionate to the degree in which this character is interesting or affecting to us. And,

IV.

That the Beauty of composition in the Human Form arises (as in all other cases) from the unity of Expression; and that the law by which we determine the Beauty of the several members of this form, is that of their correspondence to the peculiar nature of the Characteristic expression.

SECTION IV.

Of the Sublimity and Beauty of Attitude and Gesture.

BESIDE the general Beauty of form which I have considered, there are various emotions of Beauty felt from peculiar POSITIONS, or MOTIONS of the Human Body. The first of these constitutes the Beauty of *Attitude*, the second the Beauty of *Gesture*.

The proper expression of form is that of the permanent character or disposition of mind. The expressions, on the contrary, of attitude and of gesture, are those of temporary or occasional passion or affection. They have, therefore, the same relation to the expression of the general form, that the variable colours and features of the Countenance have to the expression of the general Countenance.

I have only farther to premise, that Proportion, or that proper conformation of parts, which is necessary for the purposes of the animal frame, is as essential to the Beauty of attitude and gesture, as it is to that of form in general. No form can be beautiful which is disproportioned; but every form that is proportioned is not beautiful. In the same manner, no attitude or gesture can properly be beautiful in a form which is disproportioned or deformed; but every attitude or gesture in a well-proportioned form is not felt as beautiful. For this Beauty, therefore, we must search for other causes.

Whatever may be the result of our investigation, it is to be observed, in the first place, that in this case, as in the foregoing case of form, there are two very distinct expressions, which any attitude or gesture may signify to us.

1. The first is that of Ease or constraint, of physical pleasure or physical pain. Our

knowledge of this expression is derived from all the sources of our knowledge, from our own experience, from our sympathy with others, and from their language and analogous experience. There is no child, perhaps, who does not immediately perceive, from the attitudes or gestures of others, whether they are easy or constrained; and who does not feel pain when he witnesses any gesture or attitude which seems to him forced or extreme. The same principle guides us in a still greater degree in maturity.—And in the fine arts, in those representations of Human Form or Action, where something greater and more perfect than ordinary nature is attempted to be produced, we still feel that ease is necessary to the Beauty either of attitude or gesture; and that we are incapable of entering into the full expression of the form, if any thing harsh or constrained appears in its composition. Of the truth of this proposition, I shall enter into no farther explanation. I have only to

add, that while it is an expression necessary to the Beauty either of attitude or gesture, it does not *constitute* this Beauty. Many attitudes and gestures may be easy and unconstrained, but they are not therefore beautiful. In every mechanical profession, ease is acquired by the labourers or artists; but the attitudes or gestures which such professions exhibit, are not therefore beautiful. In the common business of life, we everywhere see ease in the performance of it, but we do not everywhere see Beauty in gesture or attitude.

The expression, therefore, of Ease or facility, is necessary to the Beauty of attitude or gesture, in the same manner as that of proportion is to the Beauty of form. It is the *negative* Beauty of gesture and attitude, because without it this Beauty cannot exist, but as it does not of itself constitute it, we must look to other causes for the origin of their *positive* Beauty.

2. The second great expression of which

attitude and gesture in the Human Form are significant to us, is that of Passion, or Emotion; or of some pleasing or interesting quality of an intellectual or moral Mind. That such expressions of mind do exist; that in our earliest years we interpret the sentiments of the minds of others, from the external appearances of their gesture or attitude;—that, whether an original or acquired language, it is yet a language which all men understand; that in the defect of artificial language, it is the universal language, to which all men instinctively have recourse, and which all men as instinctively comprehend: that the attitudes, in short, of majesty, fortitude, hope, love, pity, despondence, &c.; and that the gestures of gaiety, mirth, rapture, anger, revenge, melancholy, despair, &c.; are intelligible to mankind, without any previous instruction; and that, when they are understood, they convey the peculiar emotions which the affections of mind they signify are fitted

to convey, are propositions so plain, and so universally acknowledged, that I cannot detain my readers by any formal illustration of them.

The object which I have in view, is, to solicit them to observe, that all the *positive* Beauty or Sublimity which they experience in such attitudes or gestures, is finally to be ascribed to the Characters or dispositions of mind of which they are significant.

I.

If there were any gestures or attitudes of the Human Form which were necessarily and originally beautiful, it would follow that such gestures or attitudes of Beauty might be found under every variety of expression. If, on the contrary, the Beauty of these conformations arises from the expressions of mind which they signify, then it ought to follow, that no gestures or attitudes should be beautiful that are not expressive of interesting or amiable affections.

For the determination of this question, the most ignorant man has all the knowledge that is necessary. Every man can distinguish between the attitudes or gestures of amiable or unamiable dispositions: between the attitudes or gestures of gaiety, gentleness, pity, humility, &c. and those of fear, rage, envy, pride, cruelty, &c. Of all these various attitudes and gestures, the Human Form is susceptible. The only question is, which of these classes of expression is beautiful? and what the answer to that question is to be, I leave most willingly to my readers to determine.

If this is the case in real life, it is naturally the same in the representation of it. The genius of painting and statuary has imagined and represented all the classes of expression of which the Human Form is capable. Which of these is it that we feel and that we speak of as beautiful? What are the gestures or attitudes on which our imagination loves to dwell, and which seem to us to

give a higher intelligence and meaning to the rude language of common nature? Is it not upon those, which are expressive to us of great, or heroic, or amiable dispositions *alone;* and do we not wish to forget those, on the other hand, which convey to us the idea of dark, or malignant, or selfish affections? We yield, perhaps, to the powers of the Artist: We acknowledge the use of such forms and such expressions for the general effect of contrast in the composition; but we never mistake between the original and the artificial Beauty; and we only lament (as we do in real life), that the forms of vice should be necessary to give effect to the character and the expression of virtue. The artist may speak (in the language of art), of the Beauty of such attitudes or gestures, in the same manner as the lover of dramatic art may speak of the Beauty of the representation of *Richard* or *Iago.* But these are obviously conventional terms; terms which express, not the

Beauty of the character represented, but of the justness of the representation; and of which every one has in his power to judge, when he separates the character from the composition; and considers whether the attitudes or gestures which express such characters are beautiful *in themselves*, or only beautiful in reference to the end of the composition.

If any thing more were necessary to be said, upon a principle so obvious, I would entreat my readers to make a simple though an imaginary experiment: to assume to themselves, in the first place, the most perfect form they have known, whether of male or female Beauty; and then to throw this same exquisite form into the situations I shall suggest, and which their own experience of the influence of mind upon the material frame will sufficiently justify.

Let them, in the first place, suppose this form under the influence of some *very uninteresting or vulgar emotion*, such as ever oc-

curs, and must ever occur, in the common business of life, even to the greatest and the best of mankind. In such circumstances, are any attitudes or gestures felt as beautiful? The most perfect form of man may be doomed to low and degrading labour: may follow the plough, or toil at the oar, or labour at the anvil, or be extenuated at the shuttle. The most interesting form of woman may, in the same manner, be employed in the various debasing offices of common servitude, or in the low higgling of the market, or in the angry contests of narrow economy, &c. In such situations, is the attitude or gesture of any form (however naturally beautiful in itself) ever remarked as beautiful? and do we not wish for some higher or more interesting expression, before we expect to find it? "No man," says the French proverb, "is a "hero to his valet de chambre." The truth of the proverb may be extended much farther; and there is no man capable of ob-

servation, who must not have been often struck with the contradictory emotions he has felt from the appearances of the same form, and the complete absence of Beauty in the attitudes and gestures of the same person, in whom, at other times, and when under the dominion of any interesting emotion, he felt all the influence of gesture or of attitude.

Let the Experimentalist suppose, in the second place, the assumed form under the dominion of any *unamiable* or *vicious* emotion.—Let him imagine it under the influence of rage, or envy, or cruelty, or revenge, or remorse, &c. and then ask himself whether, in such circumstances, the gestures or the attitudes of the form are beautiful? Such experiments it may have been the misfortune of some to verify; such attitudes or gesture, all, in some degree, may have seen, in the representations of the painter or the sculptor; and whatever may be the illusion of art, or the artificial

Beauty which arises from the powers of invention or composition, there is no one who will not acknowledge that, *in themselves* at least, such gestures or attitudes are not beautiful; and that if they occurred in real life they would be felt either as painful or revolting.

Let the observer then, in the last place, suppose his assumed form under the dominion only of *amiable or of interesting emotions;* let him animate it with hope or love, or joy, or tenderness, or melancholy, or dignity, or patriotism, or benevolence, or devotion; and let him then ask himself, what is the character of the attitudes or gestures which the instincts of his imagination supply? He will find (if I do not much deceive myself), that all the attitudes or gestures which then rise before him are beautiful; that every conformation of the human frame which is expressive of such dispositions is pleasing and delightful to him: and what is more, that the emotion they produce in him, is pre-

cisely the *same* with that which he feels from the expression of the same dispositions by the artificial communication of language. I have used the simplest illustration that occurs to me; but if my readers are conscious of its justice, it will be sufficient to show them, that the Beauty of attitude or gesture arises, not from any original and independent Beauty in certain conformations of the members of the human form, but from the expression they convey of the dispositions or passions by which it is animated.

2. In addition to this very obvious consideration, I must observe, that if the Beauty of attitude or gesture is predetermined by any law of our constitution, it cannot obviously exist in different and contrary appearances or conformations. If, for instance, the full display of all the muscular force or vigour of the form affords the central Beauty of the attitudes or gestures of that form, then no attitude or gesture which hides, which diminishes, or which contracts

this display, can possibly be beautiful. If the absolute Beauty of the form depends, according to another theory, upon the preservation of certain lines, or proportions, or sinuosities, &c., then it is equally obvious that no form can possibly be beautiful which does not possess these positive lines or curvatures, &c. Whatever may be the hypothesis we assume with regard to the material origin of this Beauty, nothing can be more obvious, than that the truth of the hypothesis must finally rest upon the uniformity of our sentiments upon this subject; and that no hypothesis can be deserving of regard, if it is found that opposite and different appearances are yet productive of the same sentiment of Beauty.

The facts, which are within the reach of every person's observation, seem to me to conclude decisively against every hypothesis of this kind; and to show that the most *dissimilar* and *opposite* attitudes and gestures are actually felt as beautiful, whenever they are expressive of emotions or dispositions

of mind, in which we sympathize and are interested. I limit myself to the suggestion of a very few examples.

In the attitudes of majesty, or dignity, or heroism, or virtuous pride, &c. the form is elevated, the head is raised, the chest expanded, the limbs firmly and vigorously pronounced, &c. In the attitudes, on the contrary, of the same form, under the impression of humility, pity, adoration, penitence, melancholy, &c., the reverse of all these configurations takes place. The head droops, the form bends, the chest contracts, the limbs yield, and the whole frame assumes not only a different, but an opposite appearance. All of these attitudes, however, are beautiful in nature, as well as in the representations of art. Could this happen if there were any certain conformations which alone were beautiful? or can they be explained upon any other principle than that of their being beautiful only, as the signs of the characters and dispositions of mind?

There is great Beauty in the same manner in the *gestures* of all the gay and exhilarating passions, in the frolic of infancy, the elastic step of joy, the expanded arms of hope, the clasped hands of thankfulness, in the reclining head, and heaving bosom, which express the long-drawn sigh of rapture, &c. These, however, are all *different* appearances, and not reconcileable certainly to the hypothesis of any original or independent conformation, in which the beautiful only consists. But if those different appearances are irreconcileable with such hypothesis, what shall we say to the still more beautiful gestures which even the same form exhibits under the dominion of other emotions? and when the conformations presented are not only different but opposite;—to the slow and heavy step of grief, the drooping form of melancholy, the bent posture of supplication, the reposing limbs of infant slumber, or the prostration of the whole form in ardent devo-

tion, &c.? If we look for the origin of the Beauty of these appearances in the qualities of the material form alone, we shall find it difficult to account for the production of the same effect from causes so different and even contradictory: but if we look for it in the expressions of which such appearances are significant, we shall receive a very simple solution, when we consider that all these various signs are expressive of passions which are pleasing or interesting to us, and when we remember, that the nature of the emotion we receive from these signs is precisely the same in every case, with that which we receive from our sympathy with the passions or emotions of which they are significant.

3. In the slight illustrations which I have now offered, I have for a moment taken it for granted, that our sentiment of the Beauty of attitude or gesture is uniform; and that (whatever may be the origin of Beauty in this respect) the same ges-

ture or attitude which is once beautiful, is always beautiful. It is an admission, however, very inconsistent with experience; and I have therefore to solicit my readers to observe farther, that, not only the most different and opposite gestures or attitudes of the human form are felt as beautiful, but that even the *same* attitude or gesture is felt sometimes as beautiful, and sometimes as the reverse: and that this difference of our opinion is always to be referred to our sense of the propriety or impropriety of the emotion which it expresses to us.

Every one is sensible of the Beauty of the attitudes or gestures of infancy, of the careless play of limbs, and the elastic vigour of motion, which distinguish that happy age. The same attitudes or gestures in manhood or in age would be either indecorous or painful, and would express to us nothing but imbecility or insanity. The helpless attitudes, the slow and feeble gestures of old age, are beautiful in an extreme

degree, and can never be imitated by the artist, without producing a deep and interesting emotion. The same attitudes or gestures in youth or in manhood would be positively painful, as expressing to us nothing but the most abject terror or servility. There are a thousand gestures and attitudes which belong to the female sex, which arise from their peculiar character, and constitution, and habits, and which, as expressive of female character, are, and ever must be beautiful. Give the male figure any of these characteristic attitudes or gestures, and you will soon find that the only effect is that of positive disgust and abhorrence. The assumption of the most beautiful or of the most sublime gestures of the male form, by the female sex, is ever productive of similar pain and dissatisfaction.

There is, in the same manner, a certain consistency, that we expect in common life, between the attitude or gesture of any person and the nature of the character we

attribute to him; and we never observe any violation of this consistency without pain.

The same attitude of gaiety which we feel as beautiful in the young, we should feel as disgraceful in the mature. The same gesture of joy which we should approve in the thoughtful and the old, we should consider as tame and unfeeling in the young. The grief of a young woman we expect to be expressed by greater violence of gesture, than we should approve in a character of matron firmness: and the calm and subdued gesture of matron grief, would, in the same manner, be painful or unsatisfactory to us in the form of the former. In pursuing this observation it will be found, that not only age, but profession, occupation, character of form, character of countenance, and a thousand other circumstances, determine our sentiments of the Beauty of attitude or gesture, by determining the nature of the expression we expect from the individual we contemplate; and

that the same gesture is beautiful or otherwise precisely as it accords, or does not accord with the character we attribute to the Form.

The severe and thoughtful gravity we admire in the attitude of a Judge, would be absurd in a young Lawyer. The step of dignity, the attitude of command which we love in the general of an army, would be ludicrous in a subaltern officer, &c. The same gestures or attitudes which we feel as beautiful or sublime in tragic imitation upon the stage, would be ludicrous, if they were employed even in the higher comedy, nor would they even be permitted by good taste in the inferior and less interesting characters of tragedy. It is unnecessary to say that the most approved or fascinating gestures of comedy would be altogether insufferable if they were employed in tragic representations. I shall only farther request my readers to call to their remembrance the attitudes and gestures which they have

so often admired in classic sculpture, and to ask themselves whether the *same* gestures, &c. would be beautiful in all characters, (as would necessarily be the case, if Beauty in this respect arose from any definite conformations) :—whether the gesture of the Apollo would be beautiful in the Hercules, or in the Jupiter; or the attitudes of the Venus beautiful in the forms of Juno or Minerva? Even in the lowest employment of the art of painting, (in portrait-painting) we feel the necessity of this correspondence of attitude to character; and we blame the painter whenever he chooses any attitude or position which appears to us inconsistent with the character of mind which is expressed by the Countenance. In feeling and in expressing, on the contrary, this correspondence; in selecting the attitude or gesture which suits best with the character he represents, consists one of the chief evidences of the genius of the artist; and by this means the portrait of an obscure individual

may sometimes possess the value of an original composition.

I shall only add to these illustrations, by requesting my readers to observe, in the last place, that in a great variety of cases, our sense of the Beauty of the *same* attitude or gesture in the *same* individual, is actually determined, not by the appearances which are exhibited to the eye, but by our opinion of the propriety or impropriety of the emotion which it expresses. Indignation, for instance, or rage, or revenge, are passions capable of producing very sublime attitudes and gestures; and when these passions arise from great or noble motives, the attitudes by which they are expressed are felt as sublime. Let us witness the same attitudes when they are expressive of little, or trivial, or degrading sentiments, and they immediately become painful or ridiculous. The gestures of Don Quixote in encountering the windmills, or in routing the flock of sheep, are precisely the same with those that must

have been employed by the Amadises or the Orlandos of romance; yet they would be beheld certainly with very different emotions. The attitudes of grief, of sorrow, of melancholy, are beautiful in an extreme degree, particularly in the female form. Tell us, however, that they arise from some trifling cause, from the disappointment of a party, the loss of a trinket, or the success of a rival Beauty, and we feel no emotion but those of contempt or ridicule. The gestures of almost all the gay and exhilarating passions are beautiful; and our sympathy with happiness is so great, that we never observe them without the disposition to believe that they are just. Inform us, however, that all these expressions of happiness arise from some childish, or some worthless motive; that the philosopher has only discovered a new butterfly; or that the warrior has only got a step in the army; that the joy of the youthful Beauty is only occasioned by the present of a new dress, and that of the

matron by a fifty pound prize in the lottery, &c., and the gestures we formerly admired become at once either ludicrous or disgusting. Observations of this kind may be extended to every emotion or passion; and I think it will be found, in every case, that no gesture or attitude expressive of such passions or emotions, is permanently and originally beautiful; that our opinion of this Beauty varies according to circumstances; and that the circumstance, in every case, which determines our sentiment of Beauty, is our opinion of the justness or propriety of the emotion which such attitude or such gesture signifies.

SECTION V.

Of Grace.

THE preceding illustrations are intended to shew, that the Sublimity or Beauty of attitude and gesture, arises not from any causes of a material kind, nor from any law by which certain material appearances are immediately productive of these sentiments, but from their being adapted to express, and being felt as expressive of amiable, or interesting, or respectable qualities of the Human Mind. In concluding those illustrations, I have completed all that I had properly in view in that investigation.

There is, however, a quality of which the Human Form is susceptible, and which is occasionally found both in its positions and in its motions, which is not sufficiently accounted for by this theory. This quality is

GRACE; a quality different from Beauty, though nearly allied to it; which is never observed without affecting us with emotions of peculiar delight, and which it is, perhaps, the first object of the arts of sculpture and of painting to study and to present. Upon this subject, while I presume to offer a few additional observations, I am yet to request my readers to consider them rather as conjectures, than as the results of any formal inquiry.

That there is a difference between the qualities of Beauty and of Grace, in the Human Form, must, I conceive, everywhere be admitted. The terms themselves are neither synonymous, nor are used synonymously; the emotions we receive from them are easily distinguishable, and are every day distinguished in common language; and when we refer to experience, we may find a thousand instances in which the positions and movements of the form are beautiful without being graceful. Beauty, in-

deed, in some degree or other, is to be found in the most common appearances of man; but Grace is rarely seen. We often lament its absence, while we are conscious of the presence of Beauty; and it everywhere seems to us to demand some higher and more uncommon requisites than those which are necessary to mere Beauty.

It seems to me, still farther, that the appearances of Grace in the attitudes or gestures of the form, are never perceived without affecting us with some sentiment of respect, or admiration, for the person whose form expresses them. When we observe the attitudes of joy, or hope, or innocent gaiety, we feel delight, but not respect for those who exhibit them. When we observe the attitudes of grief, or melancholy, or despondence, we feel sympathy, and the delight which nature has annexed to social interest, but we do not necessarily feel admiration. The gestures of rage, in the same manner, of force, of anguish, of terror, may

affect us with very sublime emotions of fear, of astonishment, of awful interest, but they may be unaccompanied with any emotion of admiration or respect for the individual who displays them. Whenever, on the contrary, we witness the Graceful in gesture or attitude, we feel, I apprehend, an additional sentiment of respect: a conviction of something dignified or exalted in the mind of the person, and of which the gesture or attitude employed is felt as significant to us. How far this proposition is true, must be finally determined by the consciousness of my readers. I shall observe only, that it seems to me very strongly justified both by the language of philosophers, and by the common language of the world. When we hear any attitude or gesture described as *graceful*, we are conscious, I think, of immediately feeling some sentiment of respect or admiration for the individual who displays it. Whenever we use the same term ourselves, we mean always to convey to those who hear

us a similar sentiment. Every attitude or gesture of a well-proportioned form, which is at once easy and expressive of some amiable or interesting feeling, is beautiful, and is accordingly spoken of as beautiful: But when we add the term Graceful, we wish, I think, always to convey the idea of some additional quality, which is entitled to respect, and which is expressive of some conceived dignity or superiority in the mind of the person who exhibits it. Whenever, in the same manner, any attitude or gesture affects us, beside the emotion of Beauty, with the sense of respect or admiration for the individual in whose form it appears, I apprehend we use the term Graceful in addition to that of Beautiful, to express our sense of this superiority or dignity. The application of the same observation to the sublime, either in movement or position, is within the reach of every person's inquiry; and I apprehend, that the experience of every one will teach him that the sublime

of this kind may often exist without grace; and that, when grace is perceived, it is always felt as an additional quality, and as expressive of something in the character of the person which excites veneration, or astonishment, or respect.

I.

From these preliminary remarks, I would observe, in the first place, "That there "seems to be no one emotion or class of "emotions, to the expression of which the "quality of Grace is exclusively limited; "but that, on the contrary, every emotion "in which the spectator can be interested, "is susceptible of Grace in the expres- "sion of it, either in attitude or gesture." Of so general a proposition, the full illustration is impossible within the limits to which I must confine myself. I shall only request my readers to call to mind, the different pleasing or interesting emotions of which the Human Form is expressive, and to

examine for themselves, whether there is any of them which does not admit of Grace in these expressions. If we consult experience, I am much deceived if we shall not find that every class of human feelings is susceptible of Grace in the movements or positions of the form which is significant of such qualities. All the gay and exhilarating emotions, the emotions of hope, of joy, of love, of beneficence, of admiration, &c. admit very obviously of Grace, as well as of Beauty, though it is much more rarely perhaps that we discover it. In the saddening or depressing class of emotions, on the other hand, in grief, or sorrow, or penitence, or melancholy, &c. the capacity of Grace will, I apprehend, equally be found. If we consult the productions of the fine arts, (and more particularly of the fine arts of antiquity, whose predominant feature is Grace), we shall arrive at the same conclusion. In the remains which we possess of their sculpture, there is scarcely

any emotion or class of emotions of which man is susceptible which they have not imitated. In all of these, Grace is intended, and is produced, and in all the minute or technical commentaries of connoisseurs, there is none which has limited this quality to any one expression, or class of expressions exclusively; or pointed out any appearance of the Human Form which is susceptible of Beauty or Sublimity, and which is not susceptible of Grace. If the reader will take the trouble of following out these slight suggestions, I apprehend he will be satisfied that Grace is not the result of any peculiar quality in Human Character, but of some general quality which may be common to all.

II.

I presume to observe in the second place, "That, wherever the attitude or gesture ex- "pressive of any emotion or passion, is at "the same time expressive of SELF-COM-

" MAND, (of that self-possession which in-
" cludes in our belief, both the presence of
" a lofty standard of character and conduct,
" and of the habitual government of itself
" by this high principle), the attitude or
" gesture is perceived and felt as graceful;
" and that, although every pleasing or vir-
" tuous quality of Mind may admit of
" Beauty, and every great or exalted qua-
" lity may admit of Sublimity, the sense of
" Grace is only experienced when, in the
" expression of these qualities, we perceive
" still farther, the expression of that digni-
" fied self-command which restrains them
" within those limits of refined, or of high-
" minded propriety which it has prescribed
" to itself." Of a proposition of so general a kind, the proof, I am sensible, must finally rest upon the consciousness of those who will take the pains to examine it; I presume only to suggest a few topics of illustration, both from actual nature, and from

the imitations of the fine arts, which may facilitate this examination.

I. It will be found, I think, in the first place, that the attitude or gesture of no passion or emotion, however pleasing or interesting, is actually felt as *graceful* when it is considered as violent, or intemperate, or significant of want of self-command. Nothing, for instance, is more beautiful than the attitudes of hope or joy, or the gestures of mirth and innocent gaiety. We love them in the frolics of infancy, in the sportive activities of youth, in the cheerful "abandon" of rural dancing, &c. But it is rarely that we find them graceful. In this tumult and intemperance of happiness, there is something rather that always borders upon the ludicrous, and the slightest exaggeration of the gestures is sufficient to make them the objects of laughter, instead of admiration.

Nothing, in the same manner, is more lovely than the attitudes or movements of all the kind and benevolent affections, as those

of pity, charity, beneficence, modesty, maternal tenderness, &c. yet how seldom do we, at the same time, remark them as graceful? Their hurry and intemperance, which are often additional sources of their Beauty, take away in the same proportion from their Grace, and tend to make them degenerate into positions of constraint, or into movements of violence and force.

In the other class of passions, in the severe, the suffering, the dreadful, &c. it will be found, in the same manner, I apprehend, that no attitudes or gestures are ever felt as *graceful*, which express that violence or intensity of passion, which indicates the absence of all self-command. The attitudes of horror, for instance, of fear, of despair, may be, and are very often sublime, but no one is so absurd as to consider them as graceful. The frantic gestures of rage, of agony, of revenge, &c. may often possess Sublimity; but it would be a contradiction in terms to speak of them as pos-

sessing Grace. I know not that there is any statue of antiquity in which extreme passion is represented, but in the Laocoon; and undoubtedly the first impression which it makes upon common spectators, is very different from that of Grace.

There is another illustration of the same proposition which is within every one's reach, I mean, from the observation of the theatre. In actual life there are many circumstances which prevent the exhibition of Grace in the positions or movements of the form; and amid the trivial scenes of common business or amusement, there would be an absurdity in any attempt to display it. But upon the stage, where stronger passions are represented, and more important interests transacted, some attempt, at least, of this kind, is both expected and executed. It is to this illustration that I wish to direct the attention of my readers, and to request them to observe when it is that they are sensible of Grace in the attitudes or gestures

which are exhibited. If I do not much deceive myself, they will find that no gesture or attitude is ever felt as graceful when it is expressive of violent or intemperate emotion; and that no character admits of Grace in representation, which is distinguished either by the extravagance of comic, or the violence of tragic passion.

It is on this account that grace is rarely to be found in the gestures either of infancy or of old age. The frolics of children, the wild playfulness of early youth are beautiful, but they do not amount to grace, or if they do, it is to a degree only of grace very inferior to that of which the perfect form is susceptible. Their age is yet incapable of any high sentiment of propriety and of any firm habit of self-command; and their gestures therefore are marked by a freedom and carelessness, which excite delight, rather than admiration or respect. In old age, on the other hand, the deficiency of grace arises from a different cause.

The progress of years takes but too certainly from the vigour of the human mind, and from the capacity of physical expression; and however beautiful, therefore, or sublime the gestures of age may be, they seldom are expressive of high thought or conscious superiority. It is only in the perfection of the human system; in the age when the form has assumed all its powers, and the mind is awake to the consciousness of all the capacities it possesses, and the lofty obligations they impose, that the reign of physical grace commences; and that the form is capable of expressing, under the dominion of every passion or emotion, the high and habitual superiority which it possesses, either to the allurements of pleasure or the apprehensions of pain. It is this age, accordingly, which the artists of antiquity have uniformly represented, when they sought to display the perfection of Grace, and when they succeeded in leaving their compositions as models of this perfection to every succeeding age.

It is from the same cause that grace is so seldom to be found in the attitudes or gestures of the lower orders of mankind. The usual occupations in which they are engaged are productive of no gestures or attitudes significant of emotion, and all that we look for in them is merely ease, or the absence of constraint. In their hours of sensibility or passion, on the other hand, as their education and the habits of their society seldom give them any high sentiments of propriety or decorum, the gestures which they employ are as seldom distinguished by any temperance or moderation. Their gaiety, therefore, is apt to be expressed by movements of homeliness and vulgarity, and their sufferings by correspondent movements of violence or extravagance. Whenever we do discover the rudiments of grace among them, we shall always find that they are expressive of some chastened or subdued passion; of some expression which marks the predominance of mind

over temporary emotion; and which is significant to us of a character superior to that tumult and hurry which we generally observe in their unstudied and unstrained gestures. That it is on the same account we expect some degree of gracefulness at least, in the higher ranks of life, in those who have possessed a more generous education, and that it is from their habits of accommodating themselves to this expectation that we generally find it, are subjects of illustration too obvious to require any comment.

II. I would observe, in the second place, that the attitudes or gestures of every passion or emotion are felt as graceful, when they appear as significant of this self-command or self-possession.

In the preceding illustrations I have stated that none of the gestures, or attitudes of the gay or cheerful passions (however beautiful they may be) are felt as graceful when they are violent or intemperate—when, then, are they felt as graceful? or what is the

point or degree of emotion, when they rise from simple Beauty into Grace? If the reader will pursue the investigation, I think he will uniformly find, that it is when they are subdued into temperance, and when they indicate the possession of self-command. The sports of youth, the festivities of peasants, the mirth of rural dancing, &c. admit of pleasing, and sometimes of beautiful gestures, but seldom of attitudes or gestures which are graceful: and they very generally degenerate into movements either ludicrous or grotesque. When is it that we meet, amid such scenes, with grace? It is always, I apprehend, when some individual mingles with the groupe, whose gestures indicate a character superior to the scene, and in whose movements we read a mind incapable of the intemperance of the common joy. There may be beauty in the representation of the gayest dances of the nymphs of Diana; but the grace of the goddess can only be displayed by move-

ments which are significant of purer taste and more exalted character. In Mr Hogarth's admirable print of "the Ball-Room" (intended for the illustration of a very different theory), it is impossible for the most careless observer not to perceive that even the very imperfect grace which he has given to the two principal figures arises from the composure and temperance of their feelings, compared with the tumult, and affectation, and overstrained efforts of the other dancers. The hasty and hurried gestures of joy, may often be compatible with Beauty; but they are felt as graceful only when they are softened down into chastisement and composure. There is a period in the emotion of mirth when it may assume gracefulness, but it is very different from that intemperance where "laughter is holding both his sides."

However beautiful, in the same manner, the expressions of all the social or benevolent affections are, it is only when we see

them under the control of judgment and of taste that we feel them as graceful. It is not in the hurried step of compassion, in the wild disorder of maternal anxiety, or in the sudden ardours of generous friendship, that we find attitudes or gestures of grace. It is in the more temperate period of these affections, when we see the dominion of emotion, rather than passion, and when the gestures assume the repose of habitual character. There is not a more exquisite picture of generous affection than that which Virgil has described in the well-known exclamation of Nisus,

Me, me adsum qui feci! in me convertite ferrum, &c.

Yet the painter would certainly be much mistaken, who should seize this frantic and breathless moment as the moment of grace. There are no affections so susceptible perhaps of graceful attitude or gesture as those which belong to devotion; and they have,

from many causes, been the great object of imitation among the painters of modern times. Every one must have observed, however, that it is not in their periods of violence or extremity, amid the transports of hope, or the raptures of joy, or the agonies of penitence, that grace is to be found; that the attitudes which are graceful are always those on the other hand which represent chastened and subdued emotion; and that the painters who are most eminent for the production of grace, are those who have given this chastened character to their forms, and repressed all the expressions of intemperate or unrestrained emotion.

In the opposite class of passions; in those which belong to pain and to suffering, it will be found, in the same manner, that although the extreme violence of the expressions may be sublime, the point or degree of passion which alone is susceptible of grace, is that which evinces a mind unsubdued by affliction, and which continues

to possess itself amid all the sufferings which surround it. There is none of these passions, perhaps, which does not admit of the graceful either in position or in movement, and it is in the expression of some of them that the highest degree of grace is exhibited of which the human form is capable; yet every one must have perceived that it is never in their state of violence and intemperance that this quality is found, and that the hurry and tumult of the gestures of fear, of pain, of horror, of despair, &c. if they cease to be felt as sublime, tend always to degenerate into the ridiculous or contemptible. Whenever, on the contrary, under such circumstances, we perceive the presence of a high and unconquered mind; whenever, in the composure of the attitudes, or in the tranquillity of the gestures, we see the dominion of lofty thought and exalted sentiment, we feel immediately these gestures and attitudes to be graceful; and as signs of these high qualities of mind, we

regard them with the same sentiments of admiration and of respect that we are formed to feel for the qualities they signify. Give to the dying Gladiator the attitude of agony or of horror, and, although the expression might be sublime, yet it would lose all the grace which is acknowledged to distinguish it. Give to the Apollo Belvidere any gesture of rage or revenge; and though its Beauty would not be lost, it would lose all the matchless grace, which every age has felt, in that expression of divinity which radiates from every limb of its form; in that composure which marks the superiority of a celestial being; and in that lofty scorn which disdains even to feel a victory over an enemy so unworthy of his arms. It is not, in the same manner, in the agonizing limbs, or in the convulsed muscles of the Laocoon, that the secret grace of its composition resides; it is in the majestic air of the head, which has not yielded to suffering, and in the deep serenity of the

forehead, which seems to be still superior to all its afflictions, and significant of a mind that cannot be subdued.

"What GRACE," says Mr Smith, with his usual persuasive eloquence, "what "noble propriety do we not feel in the "conduct of those who exert that recollec- "tion and self-command which constitute "the dignity of every passion, and which "bring it down to what others can "enter into? We are disgusted with that "clamorous grief, which, without any de- "licacy, calls upon our compassion with "sighs and tears, and importunate lamen- "tations. But we reverence that reserved, "that silent and majestic sorrow, which "discovers itself only in the swelling of the "eyes, in the quivering of the lips and "cheeks, and in the distant, but affecting "coldness of the whole behaviour. It im- "poses the like silence upon us; we regard "it with respectful attention, and watch "over our whole behaviour, lest, by any im-

"propriety we should disturb that concert-
"ed tranquillity, which it requires so great
"an effort to support*." It is "this recol-
"lection and self-command," which in such scenes constitute what even in common language is called the graceful in behaviour or deportment; and it is the expression of the same qualities in the attitude and gesture, which constitute, in my apprehension, the Grace of such gestures or attitudes.

As a farther illustration of the same truth, I must again hint to my readers the observation of the theatre. Within the limits which I must prescribe to myself, it is impossible for me to enter into any detail upon this pleasing subject. I shall satisfy myself by appealing to this observation, and by stating, that if the hypothesis which I have proposed is just, it ought to be found, that, whether in comic or in tragic passions, the moment of Grace should be that of composure and self-com-

* Theory of Moral Sentiments, p. 31.

mand; that every attitude or gesture which is significant of this character of mind should in some degree or other be graceful; that no characters should admit of Grace in representation, which are distinguished by violence or intemperance of passion; and that the scenes or moments in the representation of any character, which are most susceptible of graceful representation, should be those in which the dignity of the character is most displayed in superiority to the passions which subdue ordinary men. If the reader should arrive at these conclusions, he will perhaps be led to perceive the cause of the acknowledged superiority of the French to the English stage, in the article of Grace; and that the bold delineations of character which distinguish the drama which Shakespeare has formed, can be represented only by the display of an energy and extremity of passion which is incompatible with the temperance of graceful gesture.

In the preceding observations I have alluded only to the positions and movements of the Human Form, under the dominion of emotion or passion. It seems to me, however, that the observation may be carried farther, and that *wherever*, in the movements of the form, self-command, or self-possession is expressed, some degree of Grace, at least, is always produced. I shall state only two instances of this; the first is in the movements of the form, in cases of difficulty, and the second, of similar movements in cases of danger.

The common motions of walking, running, &c. have in themselves nothing of difficulty, and are therefore, in general, incapable of producing any emotion. But dancing is an art of real difficulty, and we observe it always with the consciousness of this difficulty. To acquire all the different motions which are most commonly taught in this branch of education: to appropriate them to the particular time and character

of the music: to understand the figure of every dance, which is purposely made as intricate as the time will permit; and to be able to execute all this with ease and facility, are in truth acquisitions of more difficulty than we generally believe, and require more composure and presence of mind than we are commonly disposed to imagine. When, accordingly, we see all this well performed, when we see the dancer move without hurry or disorder, perform all the steps of the dance with ease, accommodate his motions with justice to the measure, and extricate himself from all the apparent intricacies of the figure, with order and facility, we feel a very perceptible sentiment of surprise and admiration, and are conscious of the Grace of gestures, in which so much skill, and composure, and presence of mind are displayed. If we compare such a performance with the rude gestures of the untaught vulgar, or with the hurried and extravagant postures of those who happen unfortunately

to mingle in the dance without the requisite instruction, we shall soon perceive how much the Grace of gesture is dependent upon the character of mind which it exhibits; and if we ascend from this common example to the higher exhibitions of the art, to the serious or heroic dances of the opera stage, we shall see this Grace expand, from the same cause, into loftier dimensions, and be satisfied, that the applause we hear around us is justly due to every exhibition where dignity of mind is expressed, or where difficult things are performed with ease and facility. I have chosen this instance as the most familiar that occurs to me: but the reader who will prosecute the subject, will find a thousand illustrations of it, in his observation of the gestures of men in every performance which is difficult of execution, and in proportion to this difficulty; and will perceive the influence of this presence or command of mind in bestowing Grace, from the boatman at his oar, or the smith at his anvil,

to the deportment of the higher ranks in the drawing-room, where presence and ease and elevation of mind, may be expressed in things so trifling as in the movement of a fan, or in the presentation of a snuff-box.

There is still a higher degree of Grace observable in those movements which express this self-possession and serenity of mind, in cases of danger; and wherever the gestures or attitudes are expressive of this serenity, they appear to me always to be felt as graceful. It is thus, I think, very observably in feats of horsemanship, performances upon the tight-rope, &c. when they do not degenerate into tricks of mere agility, or unnatural postures. That they are felt as graceful even by the lowest people, is obvious from their conduct during such performances. They observe them with still apprehension; they shout and exult at their success; and when they speak of them to their companions, they erect their forms, and assume somewhat of the

sympathetic dignity they have felt from these expressions of superiority to danger. It is impossible, I think, in the same manner, to observe the easy and careless movements of a mason upon a roof, or of a sailor upon the mast, without some sentiment of this nature. Observations of this kind, every one may pursue; and that it is from the expression of this strength and serenity of mind that the Grace of such attitudes or gestures arises, may easily be inferred, when it is recollected that the same attitudes or gestures upon the ground, or in a place of security, would be altogether unnoticed.

I entreat leave yet farther to remark, that the conjecture which I have now stated seems to be supported by the consideration of the *parts* of the Human Form, which are peculiarly expressive of Grace, and by the nature of the *movement* of those parts when they are actually felt as graceful. The *parts* or members of the form which are peculiarly expressive to us of the tem-

perance or intemperance of passion, are those which are most susceptible of motion, or which are most easily and visibly influenced by the character of mind. It is in these parts or members accordingly, that Grace chiefly, if not solely resides; in the air and posture of the head, the turn of the neck, the expansion of the chest, the position of the arms, the motion or step of the limbs, the forms of the hair, and the folds of the drapery. That it is in the slow and composed *movement* alone of those parts, in that measure of motion, (if I may use the expression,) which indicates self-possession and self-command, that the graceful is to be found, is an observation which every one must have made, and which has been made from the earliest antiquity. Grace, according to the luminous expression of Lord Bacon, consists "in gracious and decent mo-" tion;" and I need not remind my classical readers, that wherever the poets of antiquity have represented graceful attitude or mo-

tion, they have always represented it as composed or slow; and that wherever it has been represented by the sculptors of antiquity, it has been expressed by the same signs of self-command, and self-possession. I presume to add only one illustration from Virgil, in which the distinction between Beauty and Grace in the air and movements of the Human Form, seems to me to be expressed with his usual delicacy of taste and of imagination.

In the first appearance of Venus to Æneas she is thus described:

> Cui Mater media sese tulit obvia sylvâ
> Virginis os habitumque gerens, et Virginis arma
> Spartanæ; vel qualis equos Threissa fatigat
> Harpalice, volucremque fuga prævertitur Eurum;
> Namque humeris de more habilem suspenderit arcum
> Venatrix, dederatque comam diffundere ventis
> Nuda genu, nodoque sinus collecta fluentes.
>
> *Æn.* I. 314.

In these lines, Venus appears in all the glow and gaiety of rural Beauty:—She bursts

upon us, as upon her son, by surprise; her air, her attire, bespeak youth and animation, and her hair floating upon the wind, marks the speed with which she has pursued her woodland game. All this is beautiful and picturesque, but it is not graceful. It is in the moment she disappears, and when she reveals herself by her gesture, that Virgil raises this fine being into the Grace that belonged to her:

> Dixit, et avertens rosea cervice refulsit,
> Ambrosiæque comæ divinum vertice odorem
> Spiravere; pedes vestis defluxit ad imos,
> Et vera incessu patuit Dea.
>
> *Ibid* 402.

In this description every thing is changed and exalted; her form dilates into serener majesty; her locks cease to float upon the wind, and fall in dignity around her head; her robes descend, and assume those ampler folds which mark a more elevated form, and a loftier movement; and, above all, her

gait rises from the gay hurry of the Spartan nymph, into the slow and measured step which evinces the conscious dignity of her genuine being.

The influence of this expression may be pursued farther; and it may, perhaps, amuse the reader to follow it into many appearances both in the animal world and in inanimate nature. Wherever the powers and facilities of motion are possessed, there the capacity of Grace, at least, is possessed along with them: and whenever in such motions Grace is actually perceived, I think it will always be found to be in slow, and, if I may use the expression, in restrained or measured motions. The motions of the horse, when wild in the pasture, are beautiful; when urged to his speed, and straining for victory, they may be felt as sublime; but it is chiefly in movements of a different kind that we feel them as graceful, when in the impatience of the field, or in the curvetting of the manege, he seems to be

conscious of all the powers with which he is animated, and yet to restrain them from some principle of beneficence, or of dignity. Every movement of the stag almost is beautiful, from the fineness of his form, and the ease of his gestures; yet it is not in these or in the heat of the chase that he is graceful: it is when he pauses upon some eminence in the pursuit, when he erects his crested head, and when, looking with disdain upon the enemy who follow, he bounds to the freedom of his hills. It is not, in the same manner, in the rapid speed of the eagle when he darts upon his prey, that we perceive the Grace of which his motions are capable. It is when he soars slowly upwards to the sun, or when he wheels with easy and continuous motion in airy circles in the sky.

In the personification which we naturally give to all inanimate objects which are susceptible of movement, we may easily perceive the influence of the same association.

We speak commonly, for instance, of the graceful motions of trees, and of the graceful movements of a river. It is never, however, when these motions are violent or extreme, that we apply to them the term of Grace. It is the gentle waving of the tree in slow and measured cadence which is graceful, not the tossing of its branches amid the storm. It is the slow and easy winding which is graceful in the movements of the river, and not the burst of the cataract, or the fury of the torrent.

SECTION VI.

Conlusion of this Essay —Of the Final Cause of this Constitution of our Nature.

THE illustrations that have been offered in the course of this ESSAY upon the origin of the SUBLIMITY and BEAUTY of some of the principal qualities of MATTER, seem to afford sufficient evidence for the following conclusions:

I. That each of these qualities is either from nature, from experience, or from accident, the sign of some quality capable of producing Emotion, or the exercise of some moral affection. And,

II. That when these associations are dissolved, or in other words, when the material qualities cease to be significant of the associated qualities, they cease also to pro-

duce the emotions, either of Sublimity or Beauty.

If these conclusions are admitted, it appears necessarily to follow, that the Beauty and Sublimity of such objects is to be ascribed not to the material qualities themselves, but to the qualities they signify; and of consequence, that the qualities of matter are not to be considered as sublime or beautiful in themselves, but as being the SIGNS or EXPRESSIONS of such qualities, as, by the constitution of our nature, are fitted to produce pleasing or interesting emotion.

The opinion I have now stated coincides, in a great degree, with a DOCTRINE that appears very early to have distinguished the PLATONIC school; which is to be traced, perhaps, (amid their dark and figurative language), in all the philosophical systems of the East, and which has been maintained in this country, by several writers of eminence, by Lord Shaftesbury, Dr Hutcheson, Dr Akenside, and Dr Spence, but

which has nowhere so firmly and so philosophically been maintained as by Dr Reid in his invaluable work ON THE INTELLECTUAL POWERS OF MAN. The doctrine to which I allude is, that matter is not beautiful in itself, but derives its Beauty from the expression of MIND.

As this doctrine, however, when stated in general terms, has somewhat the air of paradox, I shall beg leave, in a few words, to explain in what sense I understand and adopt it, by enumerating what appear to me the principal classes of this expression, or the principal means by which the qualities of matter become significant to us of those qualities of mind which are destined to affect us with pleasing or interesting emotion.

The qualities of MIND which are capable of producing emotion, are either its ACTIVE, or its PASSIVE qualities; either its *powers* and capacities, as beneficence, wisdom, fortitude, invention, fancy, &c. or its feelings

and *affections*, as love, joy, hope, gratitude, purity, fidelity, innocence, &c. In the observation or belief of these qualities of mind, we are formed, by the original and moral constitution of our nature, to experience various and powerful emotions.

As it is only, however, through the medium of matter, that, in the present condition of our being, the qualities of mind are known to us, the qualities of matter become necessarily expressive to us of all the qualities of mind they signify. They may be the signs, therefore, or expressions of these mental qualities, in the following ways:

I. As the immediate signs of the POWERS or capacities of mind. It is thus, that all the works of human art or design, are directly significant to us of the wisdom, the invention, the taste, or the benevolence of the artist; and the works of nature, of the power, the wisdom, and the beneficence of the Divine Artist.

II. As the signs of all those AFFEC-

TIONS, or dispositions of mind, which we love, or with which we are formed to sympathize. It is thus that the notes and motions of animals are expressive to us of their happiness and joy; that the tones of the human voice are significant of the various emotions by which it is animated; and that all the affections which we either love or admire in the Human Mind, are directly signified to us by the various appearances of the countenance and form.

These may be called the *direct* expressions of Mind; and the material qualities which signify such powers or affections, produce in us immediately the peculiar emotions which, by the laws of our nature, the mental qualities are fitted to produce. But besides these, there are other means by which the qualities of matter may be significant to us of the qualities of mind, *indirectly*, or by means of less universal and less permanent relations.

1. From Experience; when peculiar forms

or appearances of matter are considered as the *means* or *instruments* by which those feelings or affections of mind are produced with which we sympathize, or in which we are interested. It is thus that the productions of art are in so many various ways significant to us of the conveniencies, the pleasures, or the happiness they bestow upon human life, and, as the signs of happiness, affect us with the emotion this happiness itself is destined to produce. It is thus also, that the scenes of nature acquire such an accession of Beauty, when we consider them as fitted, with such exquisite wisdom, for the habitation of so many classes of sentient being; and when they become thus expressive to us of all the varied happiness they produce, and contain, and conceal.

2. From Analogy or Resemblance; from that resemblance which has everywhere been felt between the qualities of matter and of mind, and by which the former becomes so powerfully expressive to us of the latter.

It is thus, that the colours, the sounds, the forms, and above all, perhaps, the motions of inanimate objects, are so universally felt as resembling peculiar qualities or affections of mind, and when thus felt, are so productive of the analogous emotion; that the personification of matter is so strongly marked in every period of the history of human thought; and that the poet, while he gives life and animation to everything around him, is not displaying his own invention, but only obeying one of the most powerful laws which regulate the imagination of man.

3dly, From Association, (in the proper sense of that term); when by means of education, of fortune, or of accident, material objects are connected with pleasing or interesting qualities of mind; and from this connection become for ever afterwards expressive of them. It is thus that colours, forms, &c. derive their temporary beauty from fashion; that the objects which have

been devoted to religion, to patriotism, or to honour, affect us with all the emotions of the qualities of which they become significant; that the Beauty of natural scenery is so often exalted by the record of the events it has witnessed; and that in every country, the scenes which have the deepest effect upon the admiration of the people, are those which have become sacred by the memory of ancient virtue, or ancient glory.

4. From *individual* Association; when certain qualities or appearances of matter, are connected with our own private affections or remembrances; and when they give to these material qualities or appearances a character of interest which is solely the result of our own memory and affections.

Of the reality of these expressions I believe no person can doubt; and whoever will attend to the power and extent of their influence, will, I think, soon be persuaded, that they are sufficient to account for all

the Beauty or sublimity we discover in the qualities of matter.

The conclusion, therefore, in which I wish to rest is, THAT THE BEAUTY AND SUBLIMITY WHICH IS FELT IN THE VARIOUS APPEARANCES OF MATTER, ARE FINALLY TO BE ASCRIBED TO THEIR EXPRESSION OF MIND; OR TO THEIR BEING, EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, THE SIGNS OF THOSE QUALITIES OF MIND WHICH ARE FITTED, BY THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR NATURE, TO AFFECT US WITH PLEASING OR INTERESTING EMOTION.

Yet, before I conclude this long, and, I fear, very tedious Essay, there is one view of the subject which I cannot prevail upon myself to withhold. It is the view of the end, or FINAL CAUSE of this constitution of our nature; or of the purpose which is served by this dependence of the Beauty or

Sublimity of the material world, on the higher qualities of which it is made significant. It is perhaps the most striking and the most luminous fact in the history of our intellectual nature, that that principle of curiosity, which is the instinctive spring of all scientific inquiry into the phenomena either of matter or of mind, is never satisfied until it terminates in the discovery, not only of design, but of benevolent design: and the great advantage (in my humble apprehension) which man derives from inquiry into the laws of his own mind, is much less in the addition which it gives to his own power or wisdom, than in the evidence which it affords him of the wisdom with which his constitution is framed, and the magnificent purposes for which it is formed. It is in this conviction, that I submit to my readers the following hints, upon this constitution of our nature with regard to the Material World.

I. It is, in a very obvious manner, the

means of diffusing happiness (in so far as it depends upon the pleasures of taste), with a very impartial equality among mankind. We are perpetually surrounded with the objects of the material world: they are capable of giving us either pleasure or pain; and it must therefore be according to the law of this relation, that our pain or our pleasure must be determined.——If the Beauty or Sublimity of the objects of the material world arose from any original and determinate law of our nature, by which *certain* colours, or sounds, or forms, &c. were necessary and solely beautiful, then there must of necessity have followed a great disproportion between the happiness of mankind, by the very constitution of their nature. If certain colours (for instance) or forms, or magnitudes, or proportions, &c. in the scenery of nature alone were beautiful, then all men to whom these appearances were unknown, must necessarily have been deprived of all the enjoy-

ment which the scenery of external nature could give. The eye of taste would often have looked in vain for its gratification; one certain form, in every class of objects, and one prescribed composition in every varied scenery, could alone have afforded this gratification; and all the prodigal variety of nature, which now affords so delightful a subject, either of observation or of reflection, would then have been significant only of partiality or imperfection. If, still farther, in the human countenance and form, there were only *certain* colours, or forms, or proportions, that were essentially beautiful, how imperious a check would have been given, not only to human happiness, but to the most important affections and sensibilities of our nature! The influence of Beauty would then have operated, in a thousand cases, in opposition to the principles of duty; whenever it was wanting in those with whom we were connected, some obstacle, at least, would be imposed to

the freedom or the warmth of our regard; and wherever it was present, an irresistible and fatal preference would be given to those in whom it was found. The parent would turn from the children, whose forms nature had neglected, to those on whom she had lavished her external favour; the friend and the husband would feel their gratitude and their affection decrease with every shade, which infirmity, which sorrow, or which age threw over the countenances of those whom once they loved; the regards of general society would fall but too exclusively upon those who were casually in possession of these external advantages; and an Aristocracy would be established even by nature itself, more irresistible, and more independent either of talents or of virtue, than any that the influence of property or of ancestry has ever yet created among mankind.

If the emotions of Taste, on the other hand, and all the happiness they give, are

produced by the perpetual expression of mind, the accommodation of this system to the happiness of human nature, is not only in itself simple, but may be seen in the simplest instances. Wherever the appearances of the material world are expressive to us of qualities we love or admire; wherever, from our education, our connections, our habits, or our pursuits, its qualities are associated in our minds with affecting or interesting emotion, there the pleasures of Beauty or of Sublimity are felt, or at least are capable of being felt. Our minds, instead of being governed by the character of external objects, are enabled to bestow upon them a character which does not belong to them; and even with the rudest, or the commonest appearances of nature, to connect feelings of a nobler or a more interesting kind, than any that the mere influences of matter can ever convey. It is hence, that the inhabitant of savage and of barbarous countries clings to the rocks and the

deserts in which he was nursed; that, if the pursuit of fortune unhappily forces him into the regions of fertility and cultivation, he sees in them no memorials of early love, or of ancient independence; and that he hastens to return to the rocks and the deserts which spoke to his infant heart, and amid which he recognizes his first affections, and his genuine home. It is hence, that in the countenance of her dying infant, the eye of the mother discovers beauties which she feels not in those who require not her care; and that the bosom of the husband or the friend, glows with deeper affection when he marks the advances of age or disease, over those features which first wakened the emotions of friendship or of love. It is hence, in the same manner, that the eye of admiration turns involuntarily from the forms of those who possess only the advantages of physical Beauty, to rest upon the humbler forms which are expressive of genius, of knowledge, or of

virtue; and that in the public assemblies of every country, the justice of national taste neglects all the external advantages of youth, of rank, or of grace, to bestow the warmth of its enthusiasm upon the mutilated form of the warrior who has extended its power, or the grey hairs of the statesman who has maintained its liberty.

II. This dependence of the Beauty of matter upon the qualities of which it is significant, is (in a very obvious manner) the great source of the progress and improvement of human ART in every department, whether mechanical or liberal. Were there any original and positive Beauty in *certain* forms, or proportions, or combinations of matter, and were it to these alone that the sentiment of Beauty was constitutionally restricted, a very obvious barrier would be imposed to the progress of every art that was conversant in material form; and the sense of taste, would, of necessity, operate to oppose every new improvement.

As the peculiar forms, or combinations of form, which nature had thus prescribed, could alone be beautiful, the common artist would hardly dare to deviate from them, even when he felt the propriety of it; and whenever any strong motive of usefulness induced him to deviate from them, the spectator would feel that sentiment of dissatisfaction which attends vulgar and unenlightened workmanship. The sense of Beauty would thus be opposed to the sense of utility; the rude but beautiful form, would become as permanent in the productions of art, as we now see it in those cases where the ideas of sanctity are attached to it; and thus, at once, an additional influence would be given to the rude inventions of antiquity, and an additional obstacle imposed to those progressive inventions, which are so necessarily demanded by the progress of society.

In the fine arts, still more, or in those arts which are directed solely to the production of Beauty, this obstacle would seem to

be permanent and invincible. As no forms, or combinations of forms could, in such a constitution of our nature, be beautiful but those which this law of our nature prescribed, then the period of their discovery must have been the final period of every art of taste. The exertions of the artist must of necessity have been confined to strict imitation; the demand of the spectator could alone have been satisfied when accuracy and fidelity, in this respect, were attained; and the names of genius, of fancy, or of invention, must either have altogether been unknown, or known only to be contemned.

By the dependence of our sense of Beauty, on the other hand, upon the qualities of which material forms are significant, and may be made significant, a very different, and a far nobler effect is produced upon the progress of human art. Being thus susceptible of the expressions of fitness, of utility, of invention, of study, or of ge-

nius, they are capable of producing all the emotions of admiration, or delight, which such qualities of mind themselves produce; and a field is thus opened to the dignified ambition of the artist, not only unbounded in its extent, but in which, even in the lowest of the mechanical arts, the highest honours of genius or of benevolence may be won. Instead of a few forms which the superstition of early taste had canonized, every variety, and every possible combination of forms, is thus brought within the pale of cultivated taste; the mind of the spectator follows with joy the invention of the artist: wherever greater usefulness is produced, or greater fitness exhibited, he sees, in the same forms, new Beauty awakening. The sensibility of imagination thus follows the progress of genius and of usefulness: and instead of an obstacle being imposed to the progress of art, a new motive is thus afforded to its improvement, and a new reward provided for the attainment of excellence.

With regard to the Fine arts, the influence of this constitution of our nature is still more apparent. Destined as they are to the production of Beauty, the field in which they are to labour is not narrowed by the prescriptions of vulgar men or of vulgar nature; nor are they chained, like the Egyptian artists of old, to the servile accuracy of imitating those forms or compositions of form alone, which some irresistible law has prescribed. The forms, and the scenery of material nature are around them, not to govern, but to awaken their genius; to invite them to investigate the sources of their Beauty; and from this investigation to exalt their conceptions to the imagination of forms, and of compositions of form, more pure and more perfect, than any that nature herself ever presents to them. It is in this pursuit that that Ideal Beauty is at last perceived, which it is the loftiest ambition of the artist to feel and to express; and which, instead of being created by any vul-

gar rules, or measured by any organic effects, is capable of producing emotions of a more exquisite and profound delight, than nature itself is ever destined to awaken.

III. It is far more important to observe, that it is by means of this constitution of our nature, that the emotions of taste are blended with MORAL sentiment; and that one of the greatest pleasures of which we are susceptible, is made finally subservient to moral improvement.

If the Beauty of the Material World were altogether independent of expression; if any original law had imperiously prescribed the objects in which the eye and the ear alone could find delight, the pleasures of Taste must have been independent of all moral emotion, and the qualities of Beauty and Sublimity as distinct from moral sensibility as those of number or of figure. The scenery of nature would have produced only an organic pleasure, which would have expired with the moment in which it was felt:

and the compositions of the artist, instead of awakening all the enthusiasm of fancy, and of feeling, must have been limited to excite only the cold approbation of faithful outline, and accurate detail. No secret analogies, no silent expressions, would then have connected enjoyment with improvement; and in contradiction to every other appearance of Human Nature, an important source of pleasure would have been bestowed, without any relation to the individual or the social advancement of the human race.

In the System which is established, on the contrary—in that system which makes Matter sublime or beautiful only as it is significant of Mind—we perceive the lofty end which is pursued; and that pleasure is here, as in every other case, made instrumental to the moral purposes of our being. While the objects of the material world are made to attract our infant eyes, there are latent ties by which they reach our hearts;

and wherever they afford us delight, they are always the signs or expressions of higher qualities, by which our moral sensibilities are called forth. It may not be our fortune, perhaps, to be born amid its nobler scenes. But, wander where we will, trees wave, rivers flow, mountains ascend, clouds darken, or winds animate the face of Heaven; and over the whole scenery, the sun sheds the cheerfulness of his morning, the splendour of his noon-day, or the tenderness of his evening light. There is not one of these features of scenery which is not fitted to awaken us to moral emotion; to lead us, when once the key of our imagination is struck, to trains of fascinating and of endless imagery; and in the indulgence of them to make our bosoms either glow with conceptions of mental excellence, or melt in the dreams of moral good. Even upon the man of the most uncultivated taste, the scenes of nature have some inexplicable charm: there is not a chord perhaps of the

human heart which may not be wakened by their influence; and I believe there is no man of genuine taste, who has not often felt, in the lone majesty of nature, some unseen spirit to dwell, which, in his happier hours, touched, as if with magic hand, all the springs of his moral sensibility, and rekindled in his heart those original conceptions of the moral or intellectual excellence of his nature, which it is the melancholy tendency of the vulgar pursuits of life to diminish, if not altogether to destroy.

In the Sublimity or Beauty of the works of Art, this purpose of nature is yet more evident. If it is from their natural Beauty they affect us, from their being expressive of fineness, delicacy, gentleness, majesty, solemnity, &c. they then awaken corresponding emotions in our bosoms, and give exercise to some of the most virtuous feelings of our nature. If it is from their relative Beauty, from their being expressive of invention, genius, taste, or fancy in the artist,

they produce effects no less important to our intellectual improvement. They raise us to those high conceptions of the powers and of the attainments of the human mind, which is the foundation of every noble ambition. They extend our views of the capacities of our nature for whatever is great or excellent; and whatever be the pursuits from which we come, they stimulate us to higher exertions in them, by the prospect of the genius which has been exhibited, and the excellence which has been attained.

But it is chiefly in the Beauty *of the Human Countenance and Form* that the great purpose of nature is most apparent. When we feel these, it is not a mere organic or animal effect we experience. Whatever is lovely or beloved in the character of MIND, whatever in the powers or dispositions of man can awaken admiration or excite sensibility—the loveliness of innocence, the charms of opening genius, the varied tenderness of domestic affection—the dignity of

heroic, or the majesty of patriotic virtue; all these are expressed to us in the features of the countenance, or in the positions and movements of the form. While we behold them, we feel not only a feeling of temporary pleasure, but what Lord Kames has profoundly and emphatically called the "Sympathetic Emotion of Virtue;" we share in some measure in those high dispositions, the expressions of which we contemplate; our own bosoms glow with kindred sensibilities; and we return to life and to its duties, with minds either softened to a wider benevolence, or awakened to a higher tone of morality.

It is thus, by means of the expressions of which it is everywhere significant, that the Material Universe around us becomes a scene of moral discipline; and that, in the hours when we are most unconscious of it, an influence is perpetually operating, by which our moral feelings are awakened, and our moral sensibility exercised. Whether

in the scenery of nature, amid the works and inventions of men, amid the affections of home, or in the intercourse of general society, the material forms which surround us are secretly but incessantly influencing our character and dispositions. And in the hours of the most innocent delight, while we are conscious of nothing but the pleasures we enjoy, the beneficence of Him that made us, is employed in conducting a secret discipline, by which our moral improvement is consulted, and those sentiments and principles are formed, which are afterwards to create not only our own genuine honour, but the happiness of all with whom it is our fortune to be connected.

There is yet, however, a greater expression which the appearances of the Material World are fitted to convey, and a more important influence which, in the design of nature, they are destined to produce upon us; their influence I mean in leading us directly to Religious Sentiment. Had organic

enjoyment been the only object of our formation, it would have been sufficient to establish senses for the reception of these enjoyments. But if the promises of our nature are greater: if it is destined to a nobler conclusion; if it is enabled to look to the Author of Being himself, and to feel its proud relation to HIM; then nature, in all its aspects around us, ought only to be felt as signs of his providence, and as conducting us, by the universal language of these signs, to the throne of the DEITY.

How much this is the case with every pure and innocent mind, I flatter myself few of my readers will require any illustration. Wherever, in fact, the eye of man opens upon any sublime or any beautiful scene of nature, the first impression is to consider it as designed—as the *effect* or workmanship of the Author of nature, and as significant of His power, His wisdom, or His goodness: And perhaps it is chiefly for *this fine* issue, that the heart of man is *thus*

finely touched, that devotion may spring from delight: that the imagination, in the midst of its highest enjoyment, may be led to terminate in the only object in which it finally can repose; and that all the noblest convictions, and confidences of religion, may be acquired in the simple school of Nature, and amid the scenes which perpetually surround us. Wherever we observe, accordingly, the workings of the human mind, whether in its rudest or its most improved appearances, we everywhere see this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the expressions of natural scenery. It calls forth the hymn of the infant bard, as well as the anthem of the poet of classic times. It prompts the nursery tale of superstition, as well as the demonstration of the school of philosophy. There is no æra so barbarous in which man has existed, in which the traces are not to be seen of the alliance which he has felt between earth and heaven: or of the convic-

tion he has acquired of the Mind that created nature, by the signs which it exhibits: And amid the wildest, as amid the most genial scenes of an uncultivated world, the rude altar of the savage everywhere marks the emotions that swelled in his bosom when he erected it to the awful or the beneficent deities whose imaginary presence it records. In ages of civilization and refinement, this union of devotional sentiment with sensibility to the beauties of natural scenery, forms one of the most characteristic marks of human improvement, and may be traced in every art which professes to give delight to the imagination. The funeral urn, and the inscription to the dead, present themselves everywhere as the most interesting incidents in the scenes of ornamented nature. In the landscape of the painter, the columns of the temple or the spire of the church rise, amid the ceaseless luxuriance of vegetable life, and, by their contrast, give the mighty moral to the

scene; which we love, even while we dread it; the powers of music have reached only their highest perfection when they have been devoted to the services of religion; and the description of the genuine poet has seldom concluded without some hymn to the Author of the universe, or some warm appeal to the devotional sensibility of mankind.

Even the thoughtless and the dissipated yield unconsciously to this beneficent instinct; and in the pursuit of pleasure, return, without knowing it, to the first and the noblest sentiments of their nature. They leave the society of cities, and all the artificial pleasures, which they feel have occupied, without satiating their imagination! They hasten into those solitary and those uncultivated scenes, where they seem to breathe a purer air, and to experience some more profound delight. They leave behind them all the arts, and all the labours of man, to meet Nature in her primeval magnificence and beauty. Amid the slumber of their

usual thoughts, they love to feel themselves awakened to those deep and majestic emotions which give a new and a nobler expansion to their hearts, and, amid the tumult and astonishment of their imagination,

> Præsentiorem *conspicere* DEUM
> Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
> Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
> Inter aquas, nemorumque noctem.

It is on this account that it is of so much consequence in the education of the Young, to encourage their instinctive taste for the Beauty and Sublimity of Nature. While it opens to the years of infancy or youth a source of pure, and of permanent enjoyment, it has consequences on the character and happiness of future life, which they are unable to foresee. It is to provide them, amid all the agitations and trials of society, with one gentle and unreproaching friend, whose voice is ever in alliance with goodness and virtue, and which, when once understood, is able both to

sooth misfortune, and to reclaim from folly. It is to identify them with the happiness of that nature to which they belong; to give them an interest in every species of being which surrounds them; and, amid the hours of curiosity and delight, to awaken those latent feelings of benevolence and of sympathy, from which all the moral or intellectual greatness of man finally arises. It is to lay the foundation of an early and of a manly piety—amid the magnificent System of material Signs in which they reside, to give them the mighty key which can interpret them—and to make them look upon the universe which they inhabit, not as the abode only of human cares, or human joys, but as the temple of the LIVING GOD, in which praise is due, and where service is to be performed.

THE END.

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